Fuck all your plans, I'm bored

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by Wildpoet

Summary

Aiden stared at him. "…you stole my knife."
"Let go of me, Witcher," Julian growled, clenching the knife tighter in his hands.
"How the fuck did you steal my knife?!"

Or: Aiden gets a contract to 'escort an unwilling noble' (read: kidnap and smuggle) to Cidaris.
It may just be the worst contract he's ever taken.

Notes

This is completely self indulgent, sensual, smutty nonsense.
(Also, yes, this is already part of a series, because Jaskier decided he wanted to run off and have side adventures that didn't fit into the main plot)
Title of the fic from TAD's That Unwanted Animal, Title of the series from TAD's Farewell Wanderlust

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

It wasn't a secret that Cats took several 'less than scrupulous' contracts.

Aiden prided himself on refusing most contracts to kill or harm humans, but there had been hard years, and sometimes the humans… well. There tended to be a very specific type of person who could get someone angry enough to put a contract out on them. Still, abduction was a type of contract he had very little experience with.

That didn't stop him from taking the contract.

It was a rather easy job. 'Escort' the youngest son of some count or other to Cidaris- without causing permanent damage- and receive 1000 crowns.

Simple.

He'd even been told where to find the little bastard. He was a student at Oxenfurt university. A little whelp named 'Julian'.

That, at least, caused him some minor complications, until asking the right questions had revealed that the noble had changed his name in Oxenfurt to 'Jaskier'. From there it was simplicity itself to find the right bar where this 'Jaskier' was hanging out with his buddies from university.

And, while Aiden *could* have just taken him from the bar, or even on his walk home, there would be too many witnesses.

He wasn't trying to kill anyone- for once- if he didn't absolutely have to, and knocking out a bunch of teenagers and young adults to separate them from his target was conspicuous and a waste of energy.

So instead, he trailed behind the group of five students, of which Jaskier seemed to be the oldest- apparently he was almost twenty- and kept to the shadows till he watched them walk into the university housing together.

Right.

That was a bit of a snare. He'd been hoping they would separate before the building, giving him an opportunity to nab the noble.

Instead, he looked up at the large stone building.

It screamed wealth and power, and it set Aiden's teeth on edge.

Several floors rose above him, housing the students of Oxenfurt university. A bunch of privileged nobles, and a few 'well deserving youth' who had impressed the professors, either

with talent or with money. Given rooms of their own to stay in while away from their families.

And in one of those rooms, was his target.

Stretching, Aiden walked casually around the perimeter, careful to avoid any guards. Most of them were stationed at the door, anyway, not believing someone would be stupid enough to climb the outside of the building to get in.

Their mistake.

So, maybe it had taken him two hours of climbing up the building and peering in windows to figure out which room his mark was in.

Maybe he was just the tiniest bit out of breath when he finally found the right room, three floors up. *Maybe* he was relieved when he realized he didn't have to *keep climbing.*

But the noble was still awake.

He was sitting at a fancy desk, his back to the window, writing by candle light over his lute.

A bard, eh?

To be honest, Aiden hadn't really done much research into the person he was supposed to be abducting, just enough to know who to look for. He supposed there was some logic to becoming a bard. As the youngest son, the noble wasn't likely to actually inherit anything from his father other than a leisurely lifestyle. All power would go to his older siblings. *Aiden* would never have been content with that. It was nice to see that a noble had the same mentality.

Maybe the next week of travel wouldn't be *horrendously* insufferable.

The noble was writing slower now, his fingers getting clumsier as he strummed the lute. He was getting tired.

Not too much longer now.

It was simpler to abduct someone who was already asleep. Less chances for them to call for help.

Aiden didn't particularly feel like getting arrested in Oxenfurt. That would make getting contracts here again rather difficult.

Finally, after several minutes of Aiden clutching the wall, his muscles freezing up and struggling with the strain of clinging to the brick, the noble's head dropped, snapped back up for a moment, then dropped again, his head falling onto the stack of papers beneath him.

Easy.

Waiting the extra few minutes to make sure he was actually asleep was difficult, but necessary. He didn't want to be caught in the process of breaking in, after all. Rookie mistakes were a great way to be the laughing stock of the Witcher community for the next five years.

Finally though, he was sure the noble was out, and he stretched his arm a bit, before grabbing a knife and sliding it through the locking mechanism, quickly undoing it and sliding the window open.

Slipping inside, he gave himself just a moment to relax his muscles, before he got the gag ready.

Gag first, then the ropes-

Someone knocked on the door, startling the noble awake.

Jaskier jolted, blinking a bit.

Fuck, he'd fallen asleep on his paper again- now all the words were smudged.

The knock that had woken him up sounded again.

"Lights out, Jaskier," someone called, and Jaskier sighed, pinching the candle out.

"Damn professors," Jaskier muttered to himself under his breath. "Don't they remember what it's like to be young?"

Stretching, he yawned, before standing up.

He frowned.

The window was open.

He hadn't left-

Arms wrapped around him the same second as a cloth covered his mouth.

He tried to scream, but the sound was muffled by the cloth, and the arms around him were unmovable as he struggled against them.

Why would someone try to kidnap me?

A thousand other questions raced through his mind as he tried to fight, tried to knock something over to make a noise, tried to do *something,* but whoever was holding him was completely immovable.

No no no no this can't be happening!

His arms were pinned to his side as he tried to thrash around, and he couldn't even yank his head back to hit the person behind him, the hand holding the cloth to his face was holding him still, too, fingers digging into his cheeks.

"Oh for fuck's sake," the person behind him spoke, then one of the arms around him shifted and he was able to get a hand free, but before he could do anything his mind *stopped.*

" *Go to sleep,* " the voice commanded, and Jaskier was helpless to do anything but comply.

He was going to be sick.

Nausea clung to the back of his throat as he was moved, rocking back and forth, a dryness in his mouth that confused him.

He didn't remember getting *that* drunk the night before.

And the *smell.* He smelled salt water, but not the water of the docks- what was-

He tried to blink open his eyes, flinching a bit at the sunlight streaming down, and found himself facing wooden planks.

What.

He moved to push himself up only to squawk indignantly as his arms refused to move from behind his back- he was *bound-*

The night before came back, and he *groaned* into what he now recognized was a fucking *gag* in his mouth.

There had been someone in his room. The window had been open, likely how his abductor had entered his room, and he'd been kidnapped. From his room.

Fuck.

Wiggling around a bit, he rolled onto his back, glaring as he got his first look at his captor.

A strong man, with wavy black hair, tan skin from more than just long days in the sun, and green-

Green, slit eyes.

"Wit-her-" he grumbled into the gag, and the Witcher *laughed.*

"Look who's finally awake! You certainly slept for a while. Most people don't take to axii quite *that* well." The Witcher stepped over the seats on the boat they were on, till he was standing right over Jaskier, grinning, sharp teeth on full display. "Hello little lordling. Looks like you pissed off the wrong people."

He tried to argue, but his words came out muffled through the gag, and when he tried to sit up the ropes yanked him back down.

The Witcher's grin just grew. "Oh, you're not getting out of that. It's a long way to Cidaris, and I can't have you getting us caught before we even get off the river." The Witcher looked up sharply, and sighed, before reaching over Jaskier's head, and pulling down-

A tarp.

He struggled indignantly, but the tarp covered his whole body, and he couldn't even reach the damn thing to kick it, his legs tied tight to one of the seats.

"Keep quiet now," the Witcher warned with a cheerful tone. "The contract said no *permanent* damage, but I'll do what I have to in order to shut you up."

Jaskier swallowed around the gag, trying not to throw up.

This was *not* good.

As he wracked his brain for a way out, trying to ignore the imminent threat to his life, his mind kept coming back to one question:

Who the fuck had he pissed off in *Cidaris?*

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Aiden realizes this is not going to be easy.

Chapter Notes

I hope you all enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There had been two instances where Jaskier had *heard* other boats approaching, one hailing the Witcher, the other cussing him out.

Both times Jaskier had thought about crying out for help, hoping to be heard around the gag.

Both times the Witcher had shifted, so his foot was resting on Jaskier's chest, pressing against Jaskier's lungs over the tarp, the threat clear.

The contract said no permanent damage, but I'll do what I have to.

Who put a contract on *him* though? He was a nobody! The third son of a count, trying to become a bard because there was nothing for him in his home life. No one wanted to kidnap him!

Well.

Valdo might. But Valdo wouldn't pay a Witcher to kidnap him and take him to fucking *Cidaris.*

Not now, at any rate.

Next month, at the competition? Jaskier wouldn't put it past him. But now?

…His parents? Would they have put out a contract on him?

But no, again, that would be *next* month, after graduation when he didn't come home. They didn't know he was planning on running away, they just thought he was finishing his seven fucking years, getting the best degree he possibly could, and then he'd come home with some accomplishment that would make him more eligible, and marry him off to someone of a higher standing as such.

And even they wouldn't want him in fucking *Cidaris.*

Which left him with nothing, except that somehow his parents had pissed someone off, and that person had decided to take it out on Jaskier.

One more month.

Just one more month, and that part of his life would have been behind him.

Fuck.

The noble had been surprisingly quiet. Granted, that might have had to do with Aiden's blatant threat of bodily harm any time they were near another boat, but he'd expected *something* the rest of the time.

Some further whimpering or whining, some kind of *attempt* at getting someone's attention- hell, he'd expected full screaming from behind the gag.

Instead, the little noble remained completely silent, to the point where Aiden had to smell to see if the noble was still *conscious.*

But there was that fear he was expecting. One of the worst parts of abduction contracts. Especially the ones that dragged out like this. The mark would be scared shitless the entire time, and the smell would linger on Aiden's things for *weeks* after it was all said and done.

The rage was a bit unexpected, but it wasn't the first time he'd encountered it. Honestly, he should have expected it more. Nobles tended to be angry at anyone or anything that dared to knock them down a peg or two.

They neared the bank on the other side of the river, and Aiden jumped out of the boat, pulling it to shore behind some trees where they wouldn't be seen.

Thankfully, he was decently familiar with Temeria, and could navigate his way through the wild without approaching civilization.

It would be a miserable week, but there wasn't a better way to transport the noble.

Certain that there was no one close, he pulled back the tarp, frowning a bit when he saw the tears in the noble's eyes. He must not have smelled them because of the salt from the water. Still, it was kind of cute, the way the noble glared hatefully at him through tear filled eyes.

Aiden pulled a dagger out of its sheath by his hip, already prepared for the spike of fear in the air, and cut through the ropes tying the noble's feet together.

Sheathing his blade again, he grabbed the noble by the arm, hauling him up and out of the boat.

The noble stumbled as his feet hit land, but Aiden just waited a moment for him to find his feet before hauling him forward.

Of course, the noble started struggling immediately, trying unsuccessfully to pull away from Aiden, and digging his feet into the dirt as he tried to protest around the gag.

This was going to be a *long* week then.

Aiden kept dragging him forward till there were several trees between them and the shore, before spinning around and slamming him against a tree, a blade in his hand pressed against the noble's pale neck.

"Let me make this perfectly clear," he growled, grinning a bit to hopefully terrify the noble into obeying. "I'm taking you to Cidaris. My *only* instructions are that you have to be alive, with no permanent damage. So you can walk, quietly, or I can-"

He wasn't ready for the knee to his dick.

Damn, bastard can kick hard, he thought to himself as he fell, and the noble was running off through the underbrush.

Even with his experience with pain, it took him a few seconds to recover himself, and then he was off after the bastard.

The noble was fast, yes, but Aiden was a Witcher.

Even with his headstart, it was only a handful of seconds before Aiden caught up to him, pouncing and sending them both crashing to the ground.

The noble fought like a greased pig heading to the slaughter, and Aiden had a hard time with his squirming to try and get the bastard still again, taking two harsh kicks to the legs and one *clever* elbow to the stomach before he finally managed to roll on top of him, pinning him to the ground with a hand on his throat as he straddled the bastard.

The gag had come loose during all of this, and the man under him panted for breath, glaring up at him.

"That was rather naive of you," he growled, his cock still throbbing in pain. "I could give you a ten minute head start, and you'd still never get away from me," Aiden pointed out. "I'm a Witcher, remember? They hired me because there *isn't* a way to escape me. You could slip your ropes in the middle of the night and take off towards town, and come morning I would hunt you down before you saw a glimpse of civilization. You are my contract, and I will see it through."

"Fuck you," the noble spat, his teeth grit as he panted for breath. "I thought Witchers only took contracts on monsters. What did I do to earn that spot, eh?"

A good question. "I don't know. What *did* you do, eh little lordling? Because they're paying *well* for your hide."

The noble grit his teeth, that awful smell of fear getting worse.

Aiden shrugged. “Either way, whatever it was doesn’t change the details of my contract.” He incrementally tightened his grip on the noble’s throat, till breathing would be just difficult enough to make sure he was paying attention. “This is your only warning,” he growled, low. “Try something like *that* again, and we’ll find out what kind of damage doesn’t count as ‘permanent’. I’m alright losing a few crowns off the contract if it means making you more compliant.”

Then he relaxed his grip, the noble coughing slightly, his throat flexing against Aiden’s hand as he tried to pull in air.

Once he was sure the noble wasn’t about to suffocate, Aiden grabbed the gag, shoving it back in the noble’s mouth and tying it back into place, possibly a little tighter than necessary as the noble *glared* at him.

He was getting a decent idea of why someone might put a contract out on this little lordling. He was *irritating.*

Chapter End Notes

As a reminder, to everyone freaking out about today, and bans and such: I'm here. I'm not going anywhere. I'm going to be posting on here as long as I possibly can, and if anything happens, I'm gonna keep posting wherever I can till this whole thing is over. One way or another.
So, take a deep breath, drink some tea or coffee or something else nice, and if you need a distraction, I'm here.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Camp that first night

Chapter Notes

Here you go, here's the chapter connected to the summary.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He *hated* not knowing what was coming next.

The Witcher dragged him through the woods, one hand gripping his upper arm, keeping him close, even as his muscles protested the impromptu running and then the fight that had followed.

What was worse, Jaskier *knew* that there was another trick the Witcher wasn't using to keep him in line.

Whatever that mind control had been when the Witcher had taken him, he hadn't used it again, keeping it in reserve.

What were its limits? What could the Witcher make Jaskier do, that Jaskier himself would never do of his own free will?

He bit down on the gag, trying to keep the rising panic in his chest back.

He wasn't injured yet, but whatever line the Witcher had, Jaskier was quickly approaching it.

Good.

People made mistakes when their lines were crossed. When they decided to act, where they'd previously chosen not to.

If he could force the Witcher's hand, he had a chance to get away.

…Or he could be grievously injured. That was also a risk.

They didn't stop walking till the sun was setting, and Jaskier was stumbling more times than not before the Witcher sighed.

“Alright. Time to make camp.”

The Witcher pushed him to sit down on a rock in a small clearing, then got started setting up his camp as Jaskier tried to look around and figure out where he was.

He was *hopelessly* lost.

He couldn’t be sure what direction the river had been, and he was only decently certain they were heading *sort of* west, as that was the direction Cidaris was in. Beyond that, he had no idea where they were.

Once the Witcher had finished setting up two bedrolls- shockingly considerate, and Jaskier hadn’t been expecting it- he began setting up a fire, then he started putting together what looked like traps.

It was *fascinating,* and despite himself Jaskier began watching what he did with interest.

If he managed to survive this, he had been wanting to be a traveling bard. This was the kind of information he’d need, even if this wasn’t how he wanted to be learning it.

Once the traps were set and some kind of food cooking, the Witcher picked up a waterskin from his pack and approached Jaskier.

“Right, I can’t have you dying of thirst out here,” he commented, undoing the gag and pulling the fabric out of Jaskier’s mouth.

Jaskier immediately lunged, trying to sink his teeth into the Witcher’s hand-

The Witcher’s fingers wrapped around Jaskier’s throat, stilling him as the Witcher glared down at him.

“You really don’t know when to give up, do you?” the Witcher asked, his voice low.

Jaskier grit his teeth, glaring back at him. “That has been remarked on before, yes.”

The Witcher sighed, his fingers shifting up Jaskier’s neck till Jaskier was forced to arch his head, then the Witcher lifted the waterskin to his lips. “Drink,” he ordered, and Jaskier kept his lips shut. The Witcher narrowed his eyes at him for it. “If you want to be miserable, that’s your choice. This is the only water you’re getting till the morning.”

He could hold out, but that wouldn’t do him any favors, it would just prove that he was stubborn.

He wasn’t stubborn enough to not recognize that he’d only be hurting himself.

Still…

“How can I be sure you didn’t put something in it?” he challenged through the side of his mouth, and the Witcher sighed.

“Like what, drugs? I could force them down your throat and there’d be nothing you could do to stop me, I don’t need to disguise them in a drink.”

Ooooh he needed to stay away from that section of literature in Oxenfurt for a little while.

The Witcher’s nose wrinkled, as if he was smelling something confusing, and he sighed. “Last chance,” he commented, and Jaskier sighed, accepting defeat and opening his mouth, letting the Witcher pour water slowly into his mouth, giving him time to swallow without choking.

When he eventually pulled back the Witcher let him, arching an eyebrow as Jaskier panted for breath. “Do you need more? Or are you done?”

Jaskier shook his head. “Done,” he managed. He hadn’t wanted to risk the Witcher taking it away too soon, and had drank as much water as he could manage, but now his stomach hurt a bit for that, so he probably shouldn’t be drinking more water till it settled anyway.

Morning, before he got more water. Right. That wasn’t… too far off.

Hopefully.

As a bard, he tried not to push himself without water for that long, often taking drinks through the night, but if that was what he had to do, so be it.

Besides, if he timed this right, he’d hopefully be out of here before morning came.

The noble was sitting quietly, after that whole incident with removing the gag, and the water. Aiden had left the gag out for the time being, not seeing a reason to bother with it. They were far enough from the path that if there *were* any people, he’d hear them long before they’d hear the annoying bastard.

He’d have to put the gag back in overnight, he couldn’t risk him calling for help while Aiden slept, but for the moment he could give the lordling a reprieve. He almost felt bad for him. He could smell his fear, after all. But the bastard had kicked him in the balls, and tried to bite him, so Aiden’s limited supply of pity was almost out.

Besides. He wasn’t supposed to pity his own contract. That wasn’t how Witchers worked.

When the stew was ready, he dished out a bowl for the noble first, deciding to get the unpleasantness out of the way quickly. “Do I have to sit on your lap to get you to behave?” he snarked as he approached, and the noble *glared.* Aiden just laughed. “I’m kidding, lordling. I only sit on the laps of people who *don’t* try to bite me.”

“Don’t call me that,” the noble snapped as Aiden considered the awkward position, then gave up and hauled the noble off the rock, and over to the bedroll he’d acquired for him.

It wasn’t necessary by any means, but it had been cheap, and it was one more way for Aiden to ease his conscience about this whole nasty abduction business.

“What should I call you then, eh noble?” Aiden asked, content with this new position as he sat down next to him.

“Well I rather imagine whoever hired you to kidnap me told you my *name,* ” he snapped, and Aiden chuckled.

“Which one? ‘Julian’ or ‘Jaskier’? Both obnoxious. Might as well call you what you are- a tiny little lordling.” Julian *glared* at him, and Aiden just grinned. “Open up now little noble, you behaved so well for the water.”

The glare grew worse, but there was that subtle undercurrent of arousal again. Confusing.

Julian looked away after a moment, his face red, but he opened his mouth, and Aiden did his best to be careful as he spoon-fed his prisoner.

He also did his best to ignore the confusing smells from Julian’s scent as Aiden fed him, the warring arousal and embarrassment both growing stronger as he continued.

Did the lordling *know* this was a kink of his, and was ashamed of it? Or was he confused by his own reaction?

Aiden chased the thought away. It didn’t matter if he knew or not, and Aiden needed to leave it alone. This was for convenience, to stop the bastard from trying to run away *again.*

Finally the bowl was empty, and Aiden returned to his own food, eating quickly as he considered where to head the next day.

Of course he was leading them through as complicated a route as he could manage for the first few days, he needed to make sure even if Julian *could* escape, he wouldn’t be able to get far.

“…What do they want from me?” Julian finally spoke up, not looking at him. “The people you’re taking me to?”

Aiden shrugged. “Discussing that wasn’t a part of the contract.”

The scent of fear grew a little stronger. “…what if they kill me?”

“Then they’ll have wasted their coin,” Aiden pointed out, scoffing. “Assassination costs less than abduction. Less hassle.”

Now the noble was glaring at him. “Oh, so good to know there’s a *going rate* on human lives!”

“That gag can go back on at any time,” Aiden warned.

“That scared of what I have to say, Witcher?” the bastard bit out. “I thought monster hunters couldn’t afford to be cowards.”

He didn’t have to listen to this. “Alright, this little conversation is done.”

“Oh, that’s just typical,” Julian kept going as Aiden rolled to his feet, grabbing the gag. “Why would I expect a mutant to care about the last words of a man he’s marching to his grave-“

Aiden grabbed Julian’s cheek, holding him still so he could get the gag back in-

He stumbled as Julian attacked, barely managed to catch Julian’s wrist in time as his blade halted, pressing against his throat.

He *knew* that blade.

Aiden stared at him. “…you stole my knife.”

“Let go of me, Witcher,” Julian growled, clenching the knife tighter in his hand.

“How the fuck did you steal my knife?!”

Aiden stared at the noble where he held Aiden’s own knife to his throat, and felt a warmth he really *wasn’t* used to feeling around anyone but his lovers.

Fuck.

The noble was *competent.*

Thank the gods the bastard was too fucking scared of him, and angry at him, to feel anything close to the same, because that would be one *hell* of a way to fuck up a contract.

“I’m going to leave,” the noble continued, like having his knife *against* Aiden’s skin was the same as having won, “and you’re going to go about whatever you were doing before this contract, and-“

“It’s the dagger from my boot,” Aiden realized, “you grabbed it when I was trying to pin you earlier.”

“What- *yes* it’s the knife from your-“ he cut off with a yelp of pain, dropping the dagger as Aiden dug his fingers hard into the skin of Julian’s wrist.

Aiden didn’t let go, pushing Julian back as he struggled to get out of the painful grip, but Aiden had learned his lesson with this one.

“Stop, stop- *let go* you’ve made your *point!* ” The last word came out as a shriek as Aiden dug in tighter, his grip almost hard enough to snap the human’s bones as he wrenched his hands behind him, tying him back up before finally letting go.

“…You were trying to antagonize me,” he realized as Julian struggled against the ropes, the scent of fear getting worse.

Looking around, Aiden saw the first ropes, and the subtle fraying from where Julian had to have been working the knife against them the entire time they talked.

Clever bastard.

Fuck.

Aiden shook his head, picking the gag back up from where it had fallen onto the bedroll, and stared down at Julian. He arched one eyebrow, kneeling in front of him once again. “Open up,” he ordered, and after a few moments, Julian obeyed.

Aiden pushed the gag in, not quite as hard as he had earlier, and tied it in place.

“Good boy,” he commented, patting Julian’s hair.

The undercurrent of sharp arousal and humiliation reminded Aiden that he was supposed to be treading carefully, but that was a problem for a later day. This day had already had far too many.

Returning to his seat, he pulled out a knife and piece of wood, almost *wincing* at how bad the stench of fear was getting.

But as he started working, that fear started changing to complete confusion.

Ugh, he could *hear* Julian’s heart, pounding away in his chest, the adrenaline of the failed escape attempt doing its best to distract Aiden, and he set down the whittling, realizing he wasn’t going to get anything *decent* out of it tonight.

The fear spiked again.

Aiden glanced over, to find that Julian had backed himself up as far as he dared, not trying to escape, just pressing himself against a tree in an effort to look smaller as he watched Aiden.

The second he realized Aiden was watching at him back, he looked away, head down as if-

…As if waiting to be hit.

Aiden sighed. “…You’re not in trouble for trying to get away,” he finally spoke, and the confusion outweighed the fear, finally.

That’s what this was about.

“I’d have done the same thing in your spot. Hell- stealing the knife was clever. But you’re not getting away, so trying is just a waste of energy.”

Julian was staring at him again, confusion tickling Aiden’s nose, but he could *sleep* with confusion in the air, so he let it be.

Once he was ready to go to sleep, he stood back up, grabbing one more length of rope even as Julian shrank back from him.

He knelt in front of the noble, grabbing his legs and tying the rope around his ankles, preventing him from trying to run off.

After a moment’s consideration, he also took his shoes off, despite the muffled protests.

“You can get these back in the morning,” Aiden commented, “but I can’t trust you to not try to run. You’ve already proven yourself to be a clever bastard. So these are staying where you can’t reach them.”

Julian scowled, but stopped protesting, and Aiden returned to his side of the camp.

He had six more days of this bullshit to deal with.

1000 crowns really didn’t seem worth it at this point.

Chapter End Notes

‘Jaskier this is not an appropriate time to be horny!’ I say while writing this to be as sensual as I can possibly make it.
I know Aiden's being an asshole. He knows he's being an asshole. That will change, and there are reasons that will be delved into.

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Aiden's getting curious.

Chapter Notes

This chapter has one of my favorite lines that I have ever written in it. Hope you all enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sleep wasn't his friend.

Every noise through the night woke him up, panicked that someone was coming to kidnap him or kill him, till he opened his eyes and realized that he was *currently* kidnapped.

If he survived this, it would make for an epic ballad. But he hoped it was the adventurous type, and not the somber type.

Finally, when he saw the light start to grow as dawn approached, he gave up on sleeping.

It didn't help that his mouth was dry, and sleeping with a dry mouth was almost impossible.

…Maybe he could ask the Witcher to do that thing he'd done when he first kidnapped him? Whatever kind of mind control it was, it had at least helped him sleep.

But that would mean *asking* the Witcher to control his mind, and that-

He shuddered, refusing to even consider it.

Instead, he stared up at the shifting light, and the way the trees seemed to cover their clearing, offering a strange protection from the worst of nature, until the Witcher woke up.

He seemed to shift from sleeping to alert in a single instant, and Jaskier jolted a bit in surprise.

"…You're already up," the Witcher commented, before picking one of the waterskins he'd refilled the night before, taking a drink from it.

Jaskier watched him enviously, his own mouth too dry from the gag.

The Witcher glanced over at him, arching an eyebrow when he caught Jaskier staring.

“Thirsty?” he asked, and Jaskier bristled, ready for more teasing, but instead the Witcher just walked over, helping Jaskier sit up before pausing. “…If I take the gag out, will you give me any more grief?” he asked, and Jaskier shook his head.

The Witcher frowned for a moment, before nodding, reaching behind Jaskier’s head and undoing the knot in the fabric, pulling it out of Jaskier’s mouth.

Jaskier *grimaced* at the string of saliva from his mouth to the fabric, but then the Witcher was holding up the waterskin. “Open,” he instructed, and Jaskier *ignored* the flutter in his stomach and chest at that tone, instead opening his mouth.

The Witcher’s hand gently cupped his face, guiding him as he drank from the waterskin, just as slowly as the night before.

This *also* caused a flutter in his chest, and Jaskier ignored it. Just because he hadn’t been able to flirt his way into the bed of the barmaid did *not* mean he needed to be reacting like this to the Witcher that *kidnapped him.*

This time he pulled back earlier, catching his breath, and the Witcher waited till he was done panting before cocking his head to the side. “Do you need more?” he asked, and Jaskier debated it, before slowly nodding. That really *wasn’t* enough water to keep him going, and he didn’t know when the next time he’d get any was. It could be that evening for all he knew.

The Witcher tilted his head back again, still gently, the water cool against his tongue as he swallowed the blessed liquid.

“Easy,” the Witcher commented, “there’s plenty of water, you don’t have to gag on it like that.”

Jaskier wanted to glare, but he was too busy swallowing to bother.

Finally though, he had to conclude that yes, that was all he could handle at the moment, and he pulled back.

The Witcher stopped up the waterskin once more, setting it to the side and standing up to stretch.

“So what now?” Jaskier asked, and the Witcher shrugged.

“I check the traps from last night, prep any meat found there for travel, refill the water skins then break camp.”

“I meant where are we headed,” Jaskier snarked, and the Witcher grinned.

“Cidaris.”

“I meant-

“I know what you meant, lordling, you were trying to get a sense of where we are. I’m not some backwoods bandit who’s never kidnapped or *been* kidnapped before.”

Jaskier shifted a bit at that. “…You’ve been kidnapped before?” he asked.

“Aye, and a lot worse. I’ve been in your shoes, I know what you’re planning.”

Shifting again, Jaskier was reminded of his own compromised state. “Speaking of shoes, could I have mine back now?”

“When we break camp,” the Witcher agreed. “Until then, giving them back would be a liability.”

Then he was gone, off to complete his tasks, and Jaskier sighed as he leaned back against the tree.

He wasn’t gagged, he *could* call for help, but he had the sinking suspicion that the Witcher had only left him ungagged because there was no one around to hear him.

He *could* try to wiggle his way over to his shoes and put them on himself, but there was no way to untie his feet or hands, and if the Witcher came back to see him trying *another* escape attempt…

He wasn’t sure why he hadn’t been hurt yet. The Witcher had made it perfectly clear he was *willing* to hurt him should he act out. But when he’d tried to bite him, he hadn’t been hurt. When Jaskier had tried to *stab* him, the only pain he got was enough to disarm him, and force his hands behind him.

That was it.

Why had that been *it?*

The Witcher was *powerful.* He had exactly what it took to make Jaskier suffer, and *easily,* so why…

Why?

Why had he not done anything yet?

Was…

Was he that convinced that if he tried to punish Jaskier, then it would cause *permanent* damage? Was he *that* strong?

…Fuck his fucking fear reaction that was *not helpful!*

Of course, this was when the Witcher came back, his nose twitching slightly, and Jaskier watched as he got to work skinning two rabbits that had been caught in the trap.

“…What are you doing?” Jaskier asked.

“Field dressing them,” the Witcher called back, then his knife went further into the creature and-

Jaskier looked away, content to *not* know more.

He didn’t really blame the noble for being squeamish. It wasn’t a pretty sight, but as a Witcher he dealt with worse on the regular.

After he was finished tending to the meat, he placed it in a bag he’d gotten from a witch several years back, that kept the meat cold until he needed it.

Then he turned his attention back to Julian, who still smelled of confusion and fear.

And didn’t look scared.

He hadn’t noticed the night before, but Julian didn’t *look* scared. He looked angry, and nervous, but not *scared.*

…Why was he so used to hiding his emotions?

Just another piece to add to his growing list of ‘things that don’t add up about the noble’ he was starting. Right beneath ‘why does he know how to steal a knife?’

He ignored it, instead pulling out that morning’s breakfast- some bread and dried meat- and crossing over to where Julian was still sitting.

“Come on, open up,” he instructed, and the noble *glared* at him even as he obeyed.

Aiden tore off pieces of the bread first, then the meat, pressing them into the noble’s mouth.

“You could just untie my hands,” Julian pointed out between mouthfuls, and Aiden arched an eyebrow at him.

“The last time your hands were free you tried to stab me. I’m not exactly eager to try that again.”

“The *last* time-“ Aiden shoved another piece of bread in Julian’s mouth, and Julian squawked, chewing it quickly and swallowing. “The last time my hands were free was because I had to cut the rope myself, maybe if you let them free yourself-“ he cut off again as Aiden pushed one of the pieces of dried meat into his mouth, chuckling as Julian tried half-heartedly to bite him for it.

“The only reason I’d untie your hands would be to save my rope.”

“Thought you weren’t to cause lasting damage,” Julian countered, and Aiden tilted his head.

“I’m not. Why?”

“Circulation,” Julian pointed out. “Blood gets trapped for too long, might cause serious damage.”

…That was a good point.

“Fine.”

Aiden tilted him forward, quickly unpicking the knot in the rope. “You can feed your damn self, but once we break camp the ropes are going back on. And if you try to run-“

“I know, I know, you’ll make me suffer,” Julian snarked, accepting the bread and meat, setting them down in his lap as he stretched his shoulders and wrists. “Like being dragged through this hell isn’t suffering enough,” he muttered.

Aiden rolled his eyes, returning to his own bed roll to eat.

As he ate, he watched the stretches that Julian did with his free time, noting that they actually seemed *good.* Not just ‘move your body a bit’, but pointed stretches designed to relax muscles from tense positions.

Another strange thing to add to the list.

“Am I entertaining to you, Witcher?” Julian bit out, and Aiden rolled his eyes again.

“Just enjoying the show, lordling,” he cheerfully grinned back.

Julian winced at the name, turning his attention to the food, but keeping up with the stretches with whatever hand and arm he wasn’t actively using.

He’d taken Aiden’s warning about the ropes to heart then. Good.

…Maybe he should consider a different way to incapacitate the noble at night, rather than just leaving him with his arms tied behind his back.

A problem for him to contemplate as they walked.

Finished with his own breakfast he began breaking down camp, getting ready to continue on with the day, saving the bedrolls for last.

Once he’d packed his own he nodded his head. “Move to the rock,” he instructed, and Julian obeyed, wrapping his arms around his legs as Aiden packed up the bed roll, then grabbed the rope.

There was a slight scent of fear again, but Julian was doing an admirable job hiding it.

“Hands behind your back,” Aiden instructed, and slowly Julian obeyed, his mouth a thin line. Aiden moved to stand behind him, noting the slight tremor as Julian shook.

Aiden crossed Julian’s hands over each other, holding them gently in place with one hand as he wrapped the rope around them with the other, tying it and then testing the ropes to make

sure they weren't too tight before moving back around- ah fuck.

He scowled at Julian's sock covered feet, remembering the shoes.

He could either untie Julian and let him do his own shoes up, admitting his mistake and redoing this whole process over again, or he could put the shoes on him himself.

He picked up the shoes, sitting in front of Julian and pulling one leg forward.

"For fuck's- *why?* " Julian protested as Aiden tried not to *shove* the shoe onto his foot.

"In case you hid a weapon in them when I wasn't looking," Aiden lied.

For his part, Julian was staring down at him in befuddled concern. "…You're one paranoid bastard, you know that?"

Aiden chuckled, then he was done with Julian's shoes, standing up and reaching for the gag, and that *fucking* fear smell came back as strong as ever.

"Please- you don't have to- I- I'll be quiet, please don't put that back-" Jullian begged, pushing himself as far back from Aiden as possible; which on the rock, wasn't far.

Aiden sighed. "I know you're lying," he pointed out. "You're not getting out of this."

Something shifted in Julian, and he stopped begging, instead trying to bolt, *immediately* stopped by Aiden grabbing his arm and pushing him back onto the rock as Julian began cursing up a storm that Aiden just tuned out, shoving the cloth back in Julian's mouth even as he tried to bite him.

"And here I thought you were behaving yourself," Aiden teased, but it had the opposite of the desired effect.

Instead of causing Julian to get embarrassed again, the fear scent quickly shifted to sharp pain, and there were fucking *tears* prickling in the corner of his eyes.

Trying to understand this noble was proving to be more volatile than one of Lambert's bombs, and he should *probably* stop poking at the sore spots he was finding.

Unfortunately, cats weren't very good at not poking dangerous, crazy things.

One more tally on the list of 'something is wrong with this noble'.

Chapter End Notes

The next few chapters should show a dramatic shift in opinions.

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Things start to go wrong

Chapter Notes

Kitty update (since this is a thing I sometimes do on my works) after years of curling up and sleeping at my feet, my cats have started sleeping at my head sometimes. Should I be concerned?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He was *fucking tired.*

The lack of sleep the night before was catching up with him, his eyelids heavy as they walked in what seemed like circles.

He wanted to hum. To sing. To *ask questions.* But the gag in his mouth served as a perfect reminder that his sound *wasn't wanted.*

It never was.

The Witcher dragged him along through the underbrush, sometimes taking turns in random places Jaskier didn't understand, till all he knew was that the sun was *up,* his shoulders sore, and his mouth dry.

Finally, when he thought he couldn't go any further, they stopped at a small stream.

"Sit," the Witcher instructed, "We'll pause here for a bit."

Jaskier didn't need to be told twice, taking a seat next to a tree and leaning back, closing his eyes and letting himself drift off.

All too soon he was shaken awake, the Witcher crouched down next to him.

"No time to nap, lordling, we're only stopping for a few minutes."

Jaskier tried to yawn, the sound getting stuck in the cloth again.

Fuck his jaw hurt.

He startled as hands appeared next to his head, but it was just the Witcher tugging the gag down, then offering him some water.

Oh *fuck* yes.

He opened his mouth before the Witcher even said anything, then *blushed* as he realized what he'd done.

…This was going to cause a lot of responses he'd analyze later.

The Witcher pressed the waterskin to his mouth, gently patting his hair as he drank.

Jaskier couldn't even be bothered to scowl at him, too relieved to have the gag *out* and water *in.*

All too soon he reached a point he couldn't drink more, and the Witcher was pulling away, reaching for the gag again.

"Please, please just a minute more," he begged, and the Witcher paused, staring at him, before nodding.

"A minute. That's all."

Jaskier sagged, nodding quickly.

He just needed a moment without that damn thing in his mouth, to breathe normally without the tightness in his chest that the gag induced.

Whatever fantasies he'd had as a child of being whisked away from his home life hadn't included *this.*

Though. Those fantasies hadn't really included what might happen to him after being abducted. They mostly just involved *not being home.*

All too soon the Witcher was back, and Jaskier closed his eyes, accepting defeat.

The gag went back, and Jaskier bit into it, trying to hold back the tears.

He didn't need to lose that battle too.

It was nearing sundown when he heard it.

Distant howling, getting closer.

Fuck.

Julian hadn't heard it yet, but it was headed in their direction.

“Come on,” Aiden instructed, pulling the noble in the direction of a cliff he’d been intent on avoiding.

It would be a recognizable landmark if the bard managed to slip free, but it would also give them something at their backs in case the wolves decided to attack.

By the time they reached the cliffs, Julian had heard them too, twisting his head to glance back in their direction.

“Yes, those are wolves,” Aiden answered the unspoken question, “yes, they’re headed this direction.” He pushed Julian towards the cliff. “Stay there, stay out of the way.”

Julian nodded, placing his back to the rocks as Aiden drew his steel sword, taking a stance as he waited for the beasts to show up.

It didn’t take long.

Six of the beasts emerged from the trees, circling them as they snarled.

They were skinny, bones showing, and Aiden winced. Winter must have been hard, these creatures were starving.

One of them lunged at him and he feinted to the side, his sword going through its stomach.

Five left.

From there, the wolves all attacked at once, barely giving Aiden a moment as they lunged and retreated, each trying to get a bite out of him and tear him down as he tried to keep them *away* from Julian.

It didn’t work.

At a muffled scream he spun, seeing Julian cowering down, a wolf almost on top of him. Aiden quickly pulled a dagger from his boot, throwing it into the wolf’s neck before turning just in time to run through the wolf that had jumped at him in his distraction.

He ripped the sword out of the creature, focusing on the two wolves left. One lunged for his head as the other went for his legs, and a few seconds later both were dead at his feet.

Listening, he couldn’t hear any more in the woods, and he lowered his sword, turning back to the noble.

Julian was still crouched down, shaking as he gasped for breath around the gag, and Aiden scowled. “Come on, the danger’s over,” he instructed, reaching down for his arm only to pause.

There was blood, dripping down Julian's arm.

“… *fuck.* ”

Usually he'd wait to make camp till a little later, but this needed attention immediately.

Aiden barely bothered with a blast of igni at some logs and setting up the single bedroll for Julian to sit down on before he was undoing the ropes around Julian's arms, lifting his shirt carefully over his head and bringing the injured arm closer to the fire so he could look at it.

Julian hesitantly reached up with his free hand and tugged the gag out, breathing heavier as Aiden looked over the injury.

Three jagged lines scored across his shoulder from where the wolf had tried to bring him down.

The blood had mostly stopped, so the wound was clotting properly, but there could be any kind of infection on those claws.

He'd have to clean it out.

"You might want to put that back in," Aiden commented as he looted around in his bag for the ointment safe for humans.

"What? Why?" Julian asked, panicked.

"Because this is going to hurt," Aiden explained, pulling out the container, and then the needle and thread he used to patch himself up.

Always free from infection, another gift from a different witch. An issue he didn't tend to have to worry about, but it came in handy when there were humans he was responsible for.

"I'll take my chances," Julian commented, staring at Aiden with no small degree of trepidation.

Aiden shrugged. That was his choice to make. "If you bite your tongue open, I'm not fixing it," he commented, grabbing a cloth and wetting it from a waterskin as he wiped away the blood, trying not to get any bits of skin.

Julian gasped, but did his best to hold still, teeth clenched as his breathing grew heavier.

"Good boy," Aiden commented, relieved that *this* time it had the desired effect, relaxing Julian a bit as he blushed.

He wasn't above using a praise kink as a makeshift pain reliever.

"Relax for me," he ordered, knowing that this would be that much worse if he was holding himself stiffly.

Julian did as he said, dropping his shoulder as much as he could, and Aiden applied the ointment, holding Julian still as he jolted. "Relax," he reminded him, and Julian tried.

“Good,” he commented, deciding that right now was *definitely* the time to use this to both their advantages. “Very good, Julian, just stay relaxed.”

There were tinges of red traveling down Julian’s neck as Aiden finished up with the ointment. “Couldn’t you just use your mind control thing to make me relax?” he asked, his voice rather strangled.

Aiden chuckled, picking up the needle and thread. “I can’t have you relaxing into a puddle now, can I?” he teased, before placing one hand on Julian’s shoulder, gently rubbing it in almost an apology.

He couldn’t give him warning or else he’d tense up again, so instead he just poked the needle through the skin, despite the sharp “ *Ow!* ” Julian gave.

“Stay relaxed for me,” Aiden encouraged, pleased when the lines of tension disappeared from his back. “ *Very* good. Such a good boy for me, Julian,” he whispered as he worked, relieved that he’d already managed to stitch up one of the scratches without too much difficulty.

Only two left.

“Jaskier,” the noble corrected.

“What?”

“My name. It’s not Julian anymore, it’s Jaskier.”

“Mmmm,” in truth he didn’t much care, the noble was still ‘lordling’ ‘noble’ or ‘bastard’ in his head, but if it helped him relax… “Alright then Jaskier, just keep breathing like that for me. Deep breath in,” he was halfway done. Just a little bit more. “And let it out for me…” Two lines done. Good.

“…Do you always exploit people’s kinks to get them to behave?” Jaskier asked, and Aiden paused, before chuckling as he continued stitching him back together.

“Do you always wear your kinks on your sleeves?”

“I’m not wearing sleeves,” Jaskier pointed out, the cheeky bastard. Aiden kept stitching, almost finished. “You didn’t answer my question,” the noble prompted.

“Are you asking if you’re special?” Aiden countered, tying off the final stitch, but not letting go. He pulled Jaskier back by his other shoulder instead. “Because you’re not. You’re just a contract.”

Jaskier scowled at him. “Prick,” he snarled, shoving Aiden off of him.

Aiden chuckled. “That I am. But you’re whole once more. No permanent damage done.”

“I’m going to have those scars for the rest of my life,” Jaskier pointed out. “That’s fucking permanent.”

He couldn’t help it. He laughed. “Scars are a product of life, little lordling. If you think you can go through life without them, you’re in for a rude awakening.”

“Like the one you gave me when you kidnapped me?” Jaskier snipped.

Aiden just grinned, setting up the camp as Jaskier slowly stretched his arm.

He’d be fine.

And that lurch his heart gave when he saw Jaskier injured meant nothing. This was still a contract.

Nothing more.

Chapter End Notes

Yeah I don't think Aiden believes that anymore.

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Jaskier tries to escape again.

Chapter Notes

I know nothing about snake bites. Enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Waking up to someone next to his head was *never* a good sign, and Aiden grabbed the assailant with one hand, pushing him to the ground while his other hand grabbed the dagger from his hip, holding it up as he stared at who he'd just caught.

Jaskier stared up at him, eyes wide with panic, one hand on his shoe.

Aiden blinked. "…How the *fuck* did you get out of your ropes this time?" he hissed, and Jaskier swallowed.

"…Cut through them?" he offered, and Aiden blinked, looking down.

The wrist he'd grabbed had another of Aiden's daggers in it, held so loose it was almost slipping through Jaskier's fingers at this point.

Aiden lowered his own dagger before plucking the blade from Jaskier, tossing it back with his things. "When the *fuck* did you find time to steal that?" he asked, hauling Jaskier up and dragging him back to his own bedroll.

Great. Now he'd have to use even *more* rope to tie him back up with.

"Asked you a question, noble," Aiden growled as he shoved Jaskier back to his bedroll, grabbing a length of rope and tying Jaskier's hands behind his back once more, before he began patting him down, checking if there were any *other* knives he'd snatched up.

"I stole it while- *ow!* " Jaskier hissed as Aiden patted over his injured shoulder. "I stole it while you were stitching up my shoulder- I don't have another knife on me!" Jaskier complained, and Aiden relaxed.

He wasn't lying. Good.

“Don’t do that again,” Aiden warned, “I wake up swinging.”

“I got that, yeah,” Jaskier snipped.

Aiden blinked, staring around. “…Where did the gag go?”

Jaskier just grinned.

“You *fucker,* ” Aiden groaned, crossing over to his bag and pulling out an unused bandage.

“Hey- hey don’t-“

“Don’t destroy my things,” Aiden responded, shoving the makeshift gag into Jaskier’s mouth and tying it tighter than he technically had to even as Jaskier *glared* at him. “Go back to sleep,” Aiden ordered, giving Jaskier a light shove onto the bedroll and tying his legs together once more before returning to his own bed, lying down and pretending to fall asleep, waiting the long minutes till he heard Jaskier’s heartbeat even out back into sleep before he actually let himself drift off.

The next morning was possibly the worst out of all of them, the scent of fear and pain so thick in the air Aiden almost gagged on it when he woke up.

The sky was overcast and bleak, and the bastard fought him at every twist and turn, trying to bite him when given water, trying to lash out at him when he tried to give him food-

Aiden about had to *sit* on his legs to get his shoes back on him because he knew letting his hands out of the ropes was a great way to have to try and chase him back down again.

“The fuck’s gotten into you, huh?” Aiden asked as Jaskier bit the gag, apparently trying to cut it loose by grinding his teeth over it.

It was clever, if not terribly efficient.

His heartbeat was increasing too, pounding away inside his chest as Aiden kept them moving, and Aiden decided today was a good day to breathe with his mouth more than his nose.

What was scaring him so badly? Was it something new? Or just the reality of everything that was happening, finally settling into place?

Either way, he hated it, and after a few hours he concluded that they were far enough from civilization that the noble wouldn’t be heard even if he *did* try to call for help.

Stopping for a moment, he reached forward, undoing the knot in the fabric and pulling the gag out of his mouth, shoving the fabric into his pocket. “There, you happy now?” he asked, content that if nothing else, he might be able to salvage the fabric without the idiot *chewing through it.*

Surprisingly, it seemed to work a bit, some of that overwhelming fear easing, and his heartbeat returning to something less… *fatal.*

…Something *really* wasn't adding up here.

"…You start anything stupid and it's going back," Aiden warned, waiting till Jaskier nodded to keep moving.

This was *not* good.

He didn't know what was causing that fear of the gag, but it was far beyond the normal scope of 'uncomfortable and unpleasant' that he was expecting.

And the way Jaskier had *quieted down…* This was the most complacent he'd been the entire fucking time.

Something was wrong.

He didn't like that he didn't know what.

Letting himself relax, now that Jaskier wasn't fighting him, was a *mistake.*

Usually, mistakes on the path would get him killed. Right now, it might have just gotten his contract killed.

A small spring storm had popped up and so he'd left Jaskier alone at a small cave that seemed uninhabited, only leaving for a few minutes to refill their waterskins before waiting out the weather, when he heard a shrill scream.

" *Witcher!* " Jaskier called, and Aiden dropped the waterskins, rushing back.

The cave *hadn't* been uninhabited.

A vicious snake- whatever type it was, it was *long* - had wrapped itself around Jaskier's throat, hissing in his face.

A well aimed dagger decapitated it, and it dropped from Jaskier's neck, leaving him gasping for breath.

"Shit- did it bite you?" Aiden asked, catching him as he collapsed to the floor.

Jaskier nodded, still gasping for breath.

"Where?" Aiden asked, already reaching for his potions.

He hadn't thought he'd *need* a human safe potion for toxins, but he was glad he'd packed it.

"A-arm," Jaskier stammered, and Aiden turned him over, wincing at the already discolored bite.

Definitely venomous.

Uncorking the vial, he held it up to Jaskier's mouth. "Drink," he instructed, and Jaskier did so, swallowing it down even as he winced at the taste. "Alright, come on, let's get you out of here- most snakes rarely nest alone."

He lifted Jaskier into his arms, carrying him out regardless of the storm.

Rain wasn't nearly as dangerous as those snakes.

After a bit more walking Aiden found a crop of trees angled well enough that he could set up a makeshift tent, setting Jaskier down inside and untying the ropes around his hands.

He wasn't going anywhere for several hours.

By this point the venom was already burning through his body, his eyes disoriented as he shook, whether from cold or pain Aiden didn't know.

"Hold on," Aiden whispered, before standing up to go.

Before he could, Jaskier's hand found his wrist. "Please," Jaskier begged, his voice cracking, "please- don't go," he whispered, tears streaking down his face. "Father- please- please don't-"

Fuck, he was delirious.

Aiden crouched down again, setting his hand against Jaskier's forehead. "…I'm not going anywhere," he whispered, "I just need to grab the waterskins, and I'll be back."

He ran as fast as he could to get them, barely gone a few minutes, but by the time he returned Jaskier was a sobbing *mess.*

Fuck, venom was a bitch to deal with.

He crouched back down, wetting a cloth and draping it over Jaskier's brow. "You're alright," he whispered, "let me take a look at that arm, make sure the potion's doing its job."

By this point the potion should have set in, and Aiden was relieved to see that while the bite didn't look *better,* it also didn't look any worse.

"Jaskier, can you hear me?" Aiden asked, but Jaskier's eyes remained vacant and unresponsive, staring up at the fabric of the tent.

Fuck.

The rain was just starting to let up now, and Aiden took the chance to get some logs together for a fire, and get some water boiling over it.

"Damn excuse for a Witcher," Aiden muttered to himself. "Can kill anything I want, but can't keep one damn human alive. Typical."

The water was almost boiling when he heard whimpering, and turned back to the tent.

Jaskier was thrashing, his breathing agitated as he whimpered, trying to fight whatever was in his mind.

“Easy,” Aiden muttered, easily catching Jaskier’s arm and holding him still. “Easy, you’re-“ he stopped as Jaskier rolled over, vomiting by the side of the bedroll. “…You’re going to be okay,” Aiden tried, holding Jaskier’s hair away from his face as he panted for breath, ready in case he threw up again.

There were scars, behind Jaskier’s ears. Aiden hadn’t seen them before, but… he hadn’t exactly been looking, either.

They were a strange shape, curling around the ear like something he’d seen before.

Something he’d seen before a thousand times.

He knew those scars. Had seen them behind his brothers’ ears, the ones that had gone half feral during the mutations, and had been muzzled for their own safety.

… *Fuck.*

Aiden took a very slow breath, ignoring the voice that told him he’d taken a contract on the wrong noble.

Letting out the breath, he gently rubbed Jaskier’s back, making sure he was still breathing.

“You’re alright,” he murmured, vowing to himself that it would be true. “You’re going to be alright.”

And once this whole nasty business was over, he’d be paying a *visit* to the count of Lettenhove.

Chapter End Notes

Well. Now Aiden knows. :)

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Aiden has to sit with what he's just realized.

Chapter Notes

Apparently the way I phrased the end of last chapter was rather confusing. Sorry about this, hope this clears things up!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Witchers weren't supposed to care.

Witchers weren't supposed to get involved.

Witchers weren't supposed to *regret* a contract, to sympathize with a human, to *feel.*

All Aiden could feel was rage.

He should have fucking seen it.

He *had* seen it. Had been damn *curious* about why a simple scrap of fabric could cause *panic attacks.*

But he hadn't stopped.

A *muzzle.* Who in Jaskier's life had used a *muzzle* on him?

The obvious answer was his father.

That he was still crying out for, as the venom ravaged his body, the potion slowly working to heal him.

Aiden sat by his side, holding his hand, washing out the wound with warm water when he could, and doing his best to ignore that crazy side of him that said to abandon the contract and protect Jaskier with his life.

He was a Witcher. Contracts were sacred. They were completed, or the Witcher died trying.

…He was never taking another abduction contract again, though.

This was why he traveled with Lambert. His Lamb would never have let him take a contract this dumb.

“Wit…cher…?” Jaskier asked, and Aiden looked up to see Jaskier staring at him.

“I’m right here Jaskier,” he whispered, brushing his hair away from his face.

“…Say… it… again?” he asked slowly.

“What?”

“Name,” Jaskier whispered.

Oh. “Jaskier?” at Jaskier’s small smile, Aiden sighed. “Alright Jaskier, yes, I’m using your name.”

“’s a good name,” Jaskier slurred. “Picked it out m’self…”

…Julian was his given name. The one his father had likely chosen for him.

Jaskier was the name *he* wanted to be called.

…Maybe he shouldn’t leave Lambert’s side again. Lambert would have-

Alright, no, Lambert would never have picked up on that, but *Eskel* would have.

Eskel would never have gotten himself into this damn situation to begin with.

“…Get some sleep, Jaskier.”

The moon was high in the sky by the time Jaskier’s fever broke, and the bite finally looked like just another wound. Albeit one with significant bruising.

Aiden managed to get him to drink a bit more water, before taking to his own bedroll and passing out.

The next morning he woke up, and Jaskier was gone.

Aiden blinked, before scowling.

That’s what he got for not tying up the bastard. He’d somehow assumed that a venomous snake bite would *stop* the little blighter.

Oh well.

Aiden got up, stretching for a moment before he began tracing where Jaskier had gone, following disturbed plants and the faint scent of fear and sickness until-

Magic. A shriek, followed by a loud “ *Shit!* ” and a thud.

Aiden rolled his eyes, running forward to find what appeared to be a tiny leshen, trying to drag a struggling Jaskier toward itself.

Aiden made quick work of it, a well placed blast of igni through its heart killing it where it stood.

The thing must have still been a child leshen, not full grown. Dangerous, but hardly something to have made any waves in local towns.

He turned around, only to stop and stare.

After a second, he gave in and *laughed,* leaning against a tree and clutching his side at the absurdity.

Jaskier was completely and utterly *immobile,* tangled up in vines to the point he couldn't move.

His arms were stretched behind his head, and he looked…

Damn.

He didn't even look angry, just *tired,* and Aiden couldn't stop laughing.

"'s not funny!" Jaskier complained, trying to squirm against the vines which did precisely *nothing* besides ride up his shirt, which just made Aiden laugh harder.

"You're a goddamn *trouble magnet!* " Aiden managed. "I leave you alone for five minutes. Wolves, snakes, a fucking *leshen*- oh, oh you are *fun!* " He finally got ahold of his giggles enough to make his way over, kneeling next to Jaskier and carefully slicing away at the vines.

"Pleased to be a delight," Jaskier snipped, wiggling to get out of the vines as Aiden cut them away, until finally he was free of them.

Aiden pulled him up with a grasp on his arm, taking the chance to look over his arm. It was healing well. Good.

The second he let go Jaskier snatched his arm back from him. "I'm fine," he snapped, "I know I got… weird, but that was just the venom."

"Fever dreams are a bitch," Aiden agreed. "Come on, let's go get that bandaged up, and see what new unpleasantness you've discovered now."

Jaskier wasn't quite sure what to make of the way the Witcher was handling him. He'd *expected* him to be angry. To be irritated. He was getting the impression the Witcher wouldn't hurt him, but he'd expected *something.*

He hadn't known what to make of it when the Witcher laughed at him. He'd been embarrassed, certainly, but mostly… he was just *over it.* This was the most exhausting week

of his life, and he was ready for it all to be over already.

But then the Witcher kept being *gentle* with him.

Once back at camp, the Witcher gently sat him down, examining the bite on his arm again and then checking his bruises, before he finally nodded to himself and wrapped up the bite.

“You’re going to be nauseated for the rest of the day,” he said as he worked, “but you should be past the worst of it.”

“And the monster?”

The Witcher shook his head. “Those plants were just plants it was controlling, and none of them were poisonous. You should be alright. Your throat’s a bit bruised, but it was like that before. I think that was from the snake. All in all, you should be right as rain in a few days.”

“Just in time for the people you’re dragging me to to kill me. Wonderful.”

The Witcher paused, frowning. “…They won’t kill you,” he said, his voice strangely devoid of humor. “Whatever happens, it won’t come to that.” He tied off the bandage, then stood up, passing Jaskier a waterskin before he started to break down the camp.

Jaskier wasn’t sure what it was, but there was something about the way he’d said that… Something that told him the Witcher fully meant it.

He slowly drank from the waterskin, trying to sort out what had changed.

…Fuck, what had he *said* when he was poisoned? He knew he was incoherent when feverish, had been informed *several* times by the physician at Oxenfurt, and also his friends, that when his fevers spiked he became… *unsettling.* But it must have been truly horrible for the Witcher to be treating him *this* gently.

“Witcher,” he finally spoke up.

“Aiden,” the Witcher commented as he took down the tarp that had served as a tent.

“What?”

“My name,” he explained. “So you can scream it if you get into more trouble.”

Jaskier rolled his eyes as the Witcher- Aiden- grinned. “Right- Aiden- I… I don’t know what I said, when I was feverish-“

“Don’t worry about it,” Aiden dismissed, nothing left of the camp save the bed rolls, and Aiden paused. “Like I said- fever dreams are a bitch.” He dug out some food, passing it over to Jaskier, and Jaskier’s fingers brushed Aiden’s as he accepted the food. “Eat up, get some strength back. You’ll have to tell me if you get too tired while we walk. I’ll not have you undoing your recovery.”

…Now Jaskier was *definitely* worrying. What the *fuck* had he said?!

Chapter End Notes

If there is still confusion, feel free to put your questions in the comments and I'll try to answer as best I can.
Now kitty update: The saintly one woke me up by walking over my head in an attempt to reach my water bottle, and the gremlin is being calm and quietly sitting on her nest of blankets. This does not bode well.

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Jaskier is confused.

Chapter Notes

The cats are extra clingy. Apparently I've spent too much time going out and doing things.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The strangeness continued, when after the meal Aiden finished packing up, nodding his head. “Alright, come on.”

Jaskier blinked. “Aren’t you going to tie me up?”

“Do you want me to bind you?” Aiden teased.

Jaskier ignored what *that* did to him, forcing his mind back to what was happening. “I could run away at any moment. It would cause you all sorts of problems- I don’t understand-“

“Go ahead. Go back there and find out where that leshen’s mother is. Go find that cave of snakes again. Maybe you’ll even find another pack of wolves to finish the job.”

“…You need me alive. And nothing else out here does.”

“Now you’re getting it.” Aiden grinned and turned back to wherever he was walking to.

And Jaskier…

Fuck it.

Jaskier stood up, following him.

“…I could have just stayed put,” Jaskier pointed out. “Could have waited it out till someone found me.”

“We’re days from civilization,” Aiden countered. “And monsters don’t care if you aren’t moving. Sure, you might not stumble upon one, but one will find you quick enough.”

Jaskier scowled. This was… almost *worse,* in a way. Sure, he wasn't gagged, which was a relief. And he wasn't forced to walk with his shoulders tense, hands bound behind his back. But…

It felt *wrong.* Walking towards whoever had hired Aiden to abduct him, without fighting back in some way.

Sure, there was always the chance to fight back once they *got* there, but… it still felt… like he should be struggling.

"Would you stop confusing yourself if I *did* bind you?" Aiden finally asked, scowling at him.

"What?"

"You, you're working yourself into a fucking fit over there. You're overthinking things."

Jaskier stopped, staring at him. "You *kidnapped* me!"

"And you're still kidnapped, yes." Aiden agreed. "So why are you so confused?"

"Because you're confusing me?!"

"Why?"

Groaning, Jaskier thought about it as he continued to follow Aiden. "…It's… I can't…" Fuck, he was supposed to be *good* with words! "…I can run. At any moment. And I *know* I can. But I also *can't.* And it's…"

"It feels wrong, when presented with an illusion you can see through, to not try and take any chance you have, even if it's hopeless and you know it?"

Jaskier blinked. "That didn't make sense."

Sighing, Aiden slowed down till he was walking next to Jaskier. "…You're not bound. So, *technically,* you could try to run. *Technically* that's something you could do. At any moment. And there's always a chance I wouldn't catch you. Always a *chance* that there wouldn't be monsters for you to stumble upon- no matter how slim that chance is with *you*- and that you might escape, and make it to freedom. That any second could be your opportunity to get out of this. It's an illusion. You have an *illusion* of freedom. And you're clever, you can see through it, but that doesn't make it easier to ignore. Like if you're in the desert, and you see an oasis. Your mind tells you it's an illusion, a mirage, but it doesn't make it easier to turn away from it. Because what if you're wrong? What if, there actually *is* an oasis, and by turning away from it, you've doomed yourself?"

Jaskier nodded. "That's… that makes sense." He hadn't expected the Witcher to understand what he meant so clearly. Witchers weren't known for their words. Though, he didn't actually know that much about Witchers, in reality.

After a moment, Aiden nodded. "Right. Stop here for a moment."

Jaskier did as instructed, scowling and rolling his eyes as Aiden pulled a length of rope out of his bag once more. “For fuck’s- that’s not-“

“Nope, I can’t think clearly with you working yourself into a fit over this,” Aiden declared, gently grabbing Jaskier’s wrists and bringing them together in front of him before binding them together. “Nothing more to conclude.”

“This *isn’t* that helpful,” Jaskier scowled, ignoring the part of his mind that had quieted down.

“I actually find it quite helpful,” Aiden countered, grinning. “No more illusion.”

He kept a hand on the rope, tugging Jaskier along. “…What do you mean ‘no more illusion’?” Jaskier eventually asked.

“The illusion that you could ever get away from me,” Aiden explained. “Like I told you that first day. I could give you a ten minute head start, and I’d still hunt you down before you got anywhere close to civilization. I’d demonstrate it for you now, but we’re on a time crunch, and you’re a trouble magnet. I don’t need you stumbling across a pack of drowners because you weren’t by my side for ten minutes.”

Jaskier rolled his eyes, but followed along.

At least his hands were in front of him now, and not behind him.

They stopped near a stream around midday, and Jaskier took a chance to sit down, trying to rest. This was by far the most walking he’d done… possibly his whole life. If this was what it was to be a traveling bard, he had a lot of shaping up to do.

Aiden brought over a waterskin, but when Jaskier reached for it Aiden held it teasingly out of reach.

Jaskier sighed, going to sit up only for Aiden to stop him with a hand. “Now now, that’s not a courtly way to ask for something is it?”

Jaskier narrowed his eyes. “I wouldn’t know, I’ve never been to court.”

“Still not how you ask…” Aiden teased.

Sighing, Jaskier relented. “Please?”

Aiden’s grin grew. “Of course. Do you want to drink it yourself? Or would you rather I pour it down your throat?”

“So help me I will vomit on you if you don’t hand me the water,” Jaskier snarked, and Aiden chuckled, handing it over.

Jaskier rolled his eyes, drinking slowly. The threat hadn’t been idle, his nausea had been getting worse all morning.

His shoulders were stiff, but nothing he couldn't handle. And nowhere near as bad as they'd been the last few days, with his hands tied behind his back.

…Why the change?

It was only one of a thousand questions racing through his mind, though it might be one he had a hard time getting an answer for. There were other questions that were more likely to be well received. And now that he wasn't gagged, it might be a good time to get some answers.

After all, it wasn't every day one had a Witcher to answer their questions. This might be the only chance he got to ask some of these things.

"So," he began as Aiden refilled his waterskin, "what's the strangest monster you've ever fought?"

Aiden stopped, staring at him for a moment in confusion before shaking his head. "…I once fought a siren who tried to appear as one of my lovers."

Huh. "I don't think that's *particularly* strange…"

"Sirens pride themselves on being fair and beautiful and all things gorgeous. And my lover is gorgeous, don't get me wrong, but it's kind of unsettling to be fighting a beautiful maiden who suddenly changes into a gruff, burley Witcher with the crassest mouth you've ever heard, who can't hold a tune and is perpetually scowling."

Jaskier had to bite back a chuckle at the mental image.

"Alright, that's… that's pretty funny. What did you do?"

"Tossed a bomb and ran," Aiden explained. "It changed back to a siren when it died. Still get nightmares about it though."

"You… ah… you said 'lovers'? You've got more than one?"

Aiden nodded slowly. "…Aye, there's four of us. All Witchers." His smile dimmed a bit. "… Don't imagine they'll be too pleased with me."

"Why not?" Jaskier asked.

It looked like Aiden was debating saying anything more, before he sighed, sitting down. "… Witchers don't tend to take any form of contract on human, unless it's bodyguarding. Cats and Vipers are the exception." He didn't know what that last bit meant, but Aiden was talking, and he wasn't about to interrupt when he was finally getting *information* out of him. "…All of my lovers are wolves. And I don't think they'll be pleased with me for taking this contract."

"…Then why did you take it?" Jaskier asked.

"The pay, mostly," Aiden commented, "and… well. I'm sure you've figured out by now that I'm not particularly *fond* of nobles."

Jaskier nodded. He had gathered that, over their time together.

…Maybe that was what had changed. Maybe by being injured, Jaskier had stopped being ‘some noble’ in Aiden’s mind, and he’d seen him as a person.

Or maybe Jaskier had revealed something truly embarrassing and Aiden felt like being nicer to make up for it.

He really couldn’t be sure.

“…Something happened to you, didn’t it? You were hurt. This was personal.”

Aiden sighed, before standing back up. “Come on, let’s keep moving. There’s still plenty of daylight left.”

Something told Jaskier he was closer to the truth than Aiden wanted to admit.

A very dangerous part of him wanted to know more.

Chapter End Notes

We're almost to the drop point, don't worry! You'll get answers soon!
Some of them...

Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Jaskier and Aiden have found a new tentative peace. Of sorts.

Chapter Notes

The AO3 curse really came for my throat. So sorry for any mistakes! I'm posting from my phone. Because I can't post from my computer. Because my phone has data and my computer needs wifi. Of which I have none because the power is out in my apartment. Only my apartment. I'm gonna go yell at maintenance in about 2 hours when the office finally opens. Enjoy the chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"So what are Cats and Vipers?" Jaskier asked as they walked.

"Schools of Witcher," Aiden explained. "How we were raised, what we were taught. Almost the same, but there's differences. I'm a Cat Witcher."

Jaskier nodded. "So, the same with Wolves?"

"Where has this curiosity been the last few days?" Aiden asked.

"Well excuse me if I've been terrified for my life."

"I'm not going to kill you."

"I didn't say *you* would!"

Aiden glanced over at him sharply. "…They won't either. Promise."

"Right. Because you definitely know what they're planning on doing to me."

Aiden shook his head, turning back to the path.

Now that Jaskier was ungagged, and mostly unbound- *What are you doing, tying him up again? You know he's shown signs of it being a kink, so leave it alone*- he wouldn't stop talking.

Asking every and any question under the sun he could- and Aiden was inclined to answer.

This wasn't the sneering disgust he usually got from nobles, but rather genuine interest in what he had to say, and…

And every moment, Aiden was leading him towards the people who were paying him 1000 crowns to kidnap him.

If I'm lucky, they hired me to kidnap him to get him away from his parents. They didn't want him dead or injured. They won't hurt him either.

He'd never been that lucky.

People in the continent at large weren't 'nice'. They were self-serving, and cruel, and rarely charitable.

But this was his contract.

If he didn't complete the contract… he might never be able to look his brothers in the eyes again.

And if he did… he might never be able to look his lovers in the eye either.

Fuck.

That evening, camp was the most relaxed it had been this entire time.

Jaskier still smelled of nerves, but the *terror* was all but gone from his scent as he relaxed on his bedroll, humming snatches of tunes Aiden didn't recognize.

He shouldn't poke at it…

"You really hated that gag, didn't you?" Yeah, he was poking at it.

Jaskier stopped humming to *glare* at him. "Let me put it this way: I would rather you silence me with your *cock* than with that gag."

Aiden chuckled. "…If you're going to be choking on my cock it'll be because you want to be there, not to get out of something unpleasant."

After a moment Jaskier spoke up. "So you're not *not* interested…"

Aiden sent a half hearted glare his direction. "I don't mix work and pleasure."

"But that's the best type of work!"

He chuckled. "Oh, you would *never* make it as a Witcher."

"Why, because I don't kidnap children?" Jaskier asked sweetly, the brat.

“You’re an adult and you know it. And it’s because Witchers don’t survive by trying to fuck their contracts.”

“But you’re not *my* contract,” Jaskier pointed out.

“Oh, so you’re trying to get *me* killed, not yourself. Got it.” He grinned, turning back to the fire.

After a few seconds, Jaskier spoke up again. “No… I don’t want you dead.”

“Really?” he asked, surprised.

“Really.”

He wasn’t lying.

Aiden had kidnapped him, and dragged him from his home. And Jaskier didn’t want him dead. “…Huh.”

“Does that surprise you?”

“It really does.”

Jaskier rolled his eyes, leaning back again and continuing to hum.

He had a nice voice, and Aiden let himself get lost in it for a bit, simply staring at the fire.

…If he hadn’t met him as a contract. Would he have listened to Jaskier’s songs in a tavern? Would he have stopped, maybe flirted a while?

What ifs were dangerous.

Finally, he concluded it was time to go to bed.

He stood up, picking up his bedroll as he crossed to where Jaskier was sitting on his own bedroll.

“Come on,” he set his bed roll down next to Jaskier. “Get over here.”

Jaskier stared at him as he sat down. “I beg your pardon?!”

“Tying you up does absolutely nothing to stop you from running off. I’m not waking up *again* to you stumbling upon whatever else lives in these woods. So: I just have to keep you in my arms all night.” He grinned, more than a little pleased at the dumbfounded look Jaskier was sending him.

“I- But-What happened to you swinging when you wake up?”

“Well then you’re going to have to be still now, aren’t you?” Aiden grinned, but he relented. “If I fall asleep next to someone, I already know they’re there and I don’t lash out. Alright?”

"…If this is about my comments earlier, I'm not about to get it on with someone while they're literally dragging me to be tortured and likely killed."

Aiden rolled his eyes, flopping down onto the bedroll. "And I don't get it on with contracts, so there's nothing to be discussed. Come on, chest to chest or little spoon?"

After some scowling, and some scents Aiden was *ignoring*, Jaskier laid down with his back to Aiden.

Aiden draped an arm over Jaskier's side, his hand reached over to hold Jaskier's wrist loosely.

This could be a terrible idea. If Jaskier *had* somehow managed to steal a knife, he could very easily stab Aiden while he was asleep.

…Aiden wasn't thinking about how that would be the simplest way out of this whole mess.

There was a warm chest against his back, and a hand encircling his wrist when he woke up.

Jaskier lay there, enjoying the comfort it brought.

It was hard to find a bed partner who appreciated how much Jaskier wanted to be *held*, most of them wanted to be on their way once it was done, or be held by *him*. But there was something so satisfying- so *calming*- about being held tight and secure, when everything around him felt so unsettling and untethered.

Especially the last few days with the Witcher-

The good mood was gone as Jaskier realized *who* exactly was holding him secure.

Oh for *fuck's sake*.

"Well that's whiplash," Aiden muttered against his back, and Jaskier tried unsuccessfully to squirm his way out of Aiden's grasp.

After several moments, he flopped back down, scowling. "Do you mind?" he snipped, and immediately Aiden let him go.

He rolled his eyes, sitting up and massaging his wrist, even though it didn't hurt.

"…What was whiplash?" he finally asked, his curiosity getting the better of him.

"Your scent. You went from content to frustrated and angry in a matter of seconds." Aiden grinned. "Oh, were you interrupted? Were you having a nice dream?"

"Fuck off," Jaskier commented, grabbing one of the waterskins and drinking from it. After a few moments, he frowned. "My… scent?"

Aiden nodded. “Witcher. I can smell emotions.”

Oh.

“So… you can smell when I’m scared,” Jaskier realized.

“Fear, anger, pain, arousal, joy- though I haven’t smelled that one from you yet.”

“Oh I wonder why,” Jaskier snipped before the rest of it caught up. “…Oh fuck.”

Aiden grinned. “I don’t fuck contracts.”

“No, but you can smell…” he trailed off, remembering all the times he’d had *reactions* he’d thought he’d managed to keep to himself. “…*That’s* why you knew it was a kink,” he muttered to himself.

“You should know I can also *hear* you,” Aiden pointed out. “No matter how quietly you talk, I will be able to hear the words you’re saying. At least when we’re in the same camp.”

Jaskier *stared*. “…So I just have no privacy from you?”

“As I said before, I was hired because you *can’t* escape me.”

Jaskier sighed.

He was starting to accept that.

He just had to get away from the people that hired Aiden instead.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter we finally make it to the people who hired Aiden!

Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Jaskier and Aiden arrive in Cidaris

Chapter Notes

Hope you all enjoy!
It's been REALLY fun watching you all try to figure out how Aiden's gonna get out of this.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He didn’t want to do this.

There had been several contracts over his life he’d had a hard time completing, for one reason or another. Whether because the people who paid him were assholes, or because the monster hadn’t deserved to die.

There had been monsters he’d let loose before. Of course there were. But those contracts had been perfectly content with saying ‘the monster has been sent away from your village’. No one cared what happened to a monster as long as it didn’t come back to haunt them.

Abduction contracts *weren’t* the same.

He had to complete the contract, or die trying.

…Right now he was really leaning towards the ‘die’ aspect, but if a monster tried to kill him, it would also get to Jaskier, so really his only hope there was that Jaskier had *somehow* managed to smuggle another knife from him, and was willing to kill him and run away.

…And Jaskier had already said out loud, without lying, that he didn’t want Aiden to die.

Fuck.

He could always let Jaskier go.

That was an option he had.

But it came back down to that ‘illusion of choice’ that he’d been talking about earlier. If Aiden let Jaskier go, his life was forfeit.

More than that, his reputation as a Witcher would be over. All Witchers would suffer, because all Witchers were seen as the same. And either way…

Either way, he'd lose the people he cared most about.

…Better to keep his integrity as a Witcher. He had enough blood on his hands. He could live with a little more.

Can you really? Can you live with yourself for doing this? Can you live knowing the others will hate you for this? Can you live knowing they'll be right? That you'll hate yourself?

Jaskier had been quieter today as well, sensing Aiden's bad mood.

It wasn't until they stopped for lunch that he really spoke up. "…We're almost there, aren't we?" he asked.

Aiden nodded. "We entered Cidaris yesterday, we're almost to the drop point. We should be there in an hour or so."

"Drop point," Jaskier commented. "Where do they come up with those phrases? Contract I know, but 'drop point', 'mark', who decided what to call the trading of a human life?"

Aiden didn't have it in him to respond, or to tell Jaskier to stop talking. It was hard enough to walk in there, knowing he had no way of guaranteeing his safety.

"…You need to tie me up properly again," Jaskier finally said, breaking the silence. "If I'm not bound properly, they'll suspect something's off. They might stiff you of your coin."

"My *coin?* " Aiden snorted. "…Right. Coin. That's what matters." He wasn't fooling himself, and he didn't think he was fooling Jaskier either.

Jaskier held still as Aiden undid the loose ropes around his wrists, instead pulling his arms behind his back once more, tying them carefully, before reaching for the gag in his pocket.

He *hated this.*

No more abduction contracts. None. Ever.

"You have to," Jaskier pointed out. "Thank you, for respecting my wishes earlier. But if you leave me ungagged I *will* call for help, and we're going to be close enough to civilization that someone might hear me."

…Why was Jaskier doing this? Why was he trying to watch out for *Aiden?* Instead of himself?

He should be using Aiden's reluctance to his advantage, to try and find a way out. Not telling Aiden how to tie him up so that *Aiden* would get his coin.

"…You're up to something," Aiden realized, and Jaskier gave him a grimace of a smile.

"…Just think that one of us should come out of this unharmed. And it's probably not going to be me."

He was lying.

Aiden didn't know if he should be angry or relieved, but Jaskier was *lying.* Meaning he *was* up to something. He had a plan.

…Aiden just didn't know if it would be enough.

The contract had him meeting his employers in an old abandoned ruin outside of Caelf. The sun was setting as they left the trees, Aiden leading Jaskier by a grip on his upper arm towards the men.

"About damn time," one of them commented, sitting up from a fire in the camp they were in. There were ten men gathered, the Michelet brothers and their men, and Aiden did his best to appear as unbothered as usual. An easy act.

"You try dragging this one through the wilds of Temeria," he commented, pushing Jaskier towards one of the men. "I swear he found every monster between here and Redania."

"You're not being paid to kill monsters, Witcher, you're being paid for the boy."

"And you have him," Aiden agreed. "Alive, and with no permanent damage. Some slight bruising, but that was unavoidable."

I could stake out the camp, circle back after dark and try to cut him loose, the madness inside encouraged.

Jaskier put up a token struggle as the man dragged him closer to the center of camp, but he wasn't fighting that hard.

Saving his energy, most likely.

…He smelled fucking terrified though. Whatever his plan was, it had to be damn good. And given the pathetic escape attempts he'd put up the last few days…

"What are you planning to do with him?" Aiden asked.

"What's it to you?" one of the men sneered, and Aiden shrugged.

"Curiosity, mostly. A lot of money for one noble."

The man he was talking to scoffed, handing over the bag of coin.

Aiden almost wanted to chuck it into the nearest river, but that was the madness talking. That wouldn't do either of them any favors now.

“Leverage,” the man explained. “His old man has a seat on Vizimir’s council. Spends a lot of time in Tretogor. We send back pieces of the kid until his daddy agrees to let us in, and we can kill off the king.”

That was why they needed him ‘without permanent damage’. They needed as much of Jaskier as possible to send back.

Aiden knew he had to stay calm, and not let anything show, but he also knew about asshole fathers. What would happen to Jaskier, when these would-be assassins realized Jaskier’s father didn’t care enough to comply?

“You gonna stick around, watch us cut off the first finger?” the man asked, and Aiden bristled.

Shit- *now?!*

Fuck.

There wasn’t time.

Fucking- *fuck.*

He- he couldn’t stop this-

The madness in his head was getting louder and louder, and he knew he had only seconds.

Jaskier’s struggling was kicking up, and Aiden remembered the lute he’d seen when he first took him.

He’d wanted to be a bard- it was how he was planning on escaping his father-

Fuck-

“Since my contract’s complete, mind if I do it?”

Jaskier’s head shot up, *glaring* at Aiden.

The man snorted. “Kid cause you that much trouble on the way here?” he asked, before shrugging. “As long as we get the finger to send, doesn’t matter who cuts it off. Go ahead.”

Jaskier was fighting properly now, trying to get out of the grip of the two men holding him still, but Aiden shook his head as he approached.

“You can let him go, he’s not escaping me. He knows it.”

They were in the middle of camp, surrounded on all sides. Jaskier wouldn’t be able to run yet, and the men knew it.

They shoved Jaskier forward, causing him to stumble.

Jaskier tried to bolt, but Aiden quickly caught him around the middle, shoving him to the ground on his stomach as the men cheered.

This has to fucking work.

In an instant Aiden's knife was in his hands, slicing through the ropes binding Jaskier's hand together as Aiden knelt over him.

Before Jaskier could do anything Aiden caught Jaskier's right hand, pressing it to the ground, hovering the knife over his knuckles.

That same terror and pain-sharp betrayal hung so heavy in the air Aiden wondered briefly how the men couldn't smell it.

The moment dragged on, as Aiden could feel Jaskier shake under him, could smell the tears as he silently cried.

Carefully, Aiden nudged Jaskier's leg with the toe of his boot.

Come on, you've been a clever bastard the rest of the time, piece it together!

There was a sharp intake of breath, then fingers from Jaskier's free hand slipped inside Aiden's boot, grasping the handle of the dagger he kept there.

I saw you writing with your left hand, you swung out at me with your left- please be your dominant hand!

"What's taking so long?!" the man closest to him complained, getting close.

Too close.

Aiden's dagger went through his throat first as he spun, throwing two more daggers before he grabbed his sword and stood.

"Protect yourself!" he ordered Jaskier, blocking as three men tried to rush him at once.

He didn't often listen to his madness. He hoped this time was worth it.

Battle was simple. Even missing half his daggers, his swordwork was unrivaled by anyone who wasn't themselves a Witcher. The camp of men fell quickly.

At least those who went for *him.*

Checking on Jaskier, he found that the bard had managed to stab one of the men, but was now wrestling with another one that had managed to knock his knife away, and was trying to pin him down as he struggled.

There were still two more men trying to attack him though, and he had no more throwing daggers.

One of the men managed to get behind him, and Aiden barely dodged in time, the axe that should have taken his head only grazing his arm instead as he decapitated the other man, before blocking the next blow from the axe, then quickly stabbing the axe wielder in the chest, wrenching his sword out of him and turning to find that Jaskier had managed to stab the man pinning him down, and was now clenching a blade in his hands as he panted, covered in blood.

Aiden stared at him, and the dagger in his hand.

"…Fuck you, that's not the knife I gave you! When did you steal *that* one?!"

Jaskier just *laughed.*

Chapter End Notes

If you were just here for the plot, we're about to nosedive into smut for a few chapters. Just so you're aware.

Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Gathering of thoughts

Chapter Notes

Dipping our toes into some steam here

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He was alive.

He was *alive,* with *all* his fingers- thank you very much- and the men who wanted him were now dead.

The fact that they thought abducting him would convince his father to do *anything,* let alone commit treason…

Idiots.

“Are you injured?” Aiden asked, and Jaskier thought about it for a moment before shaking his head.

“No, no I managed to avoid getting hit. You?”

“When the *fuck* did you steal that?!” Aiden asked, plucking the blade out of Jaskier’s shaking hands and examining it. “…It’s the other spare dagger- how did you steal *both* of them-“

“Same time,” Jaskier explained. “I knew you might try to search me, so I hid it in the bedroll.”

Aiden stared at him. “… *That’s* why it wasn’t a lie when you said you didn’t have another knife on you. Fucking *hell* that was clever.”

Jaskier blinked. “I’m… not really sure how that’s *clever,* ”

“Witchers can hear lies,” Aiden interrupted, moving to gather all of his knives he’d thrown earlier. “Fuck, I’m gonna have to be on my toes around you.”

“Around me?” Jaskier asked, curious about that.

Now that the men Aiden had kidnapped him for were dead, what *was* the next step?

Aiden paused for a moment. “Yeah. I mean… I kidnapped you. It’s my fault you’re out here. I figured… least I could do is make sure you get on the road safely, wherever you end up going. Knowing you, you’re gonna need to at least make it to a city before I feel safe leaving your side, you damn trouble magnet.”

Jaskier swallowed. “I- I have to get back to Oxenfurt- can’t exactly leave without my degree-“

“You finished your degree a year ago,” Aiden commented as he finished gathering his daggers. “You just never told your parents so you had an excuse to stay away, and so long as they were still paying, you just paid for your room and kept the extra to save up for when you ran away after graduation.”

Jaskier’s mouth was hanging open, and Aiden smirked as he placed a single finger under his jaw, lifting it back up. “I know more about you than you think.”

“…So *that’s* what I said when I was poisoned,” Jaskier muttered.

“Among other things,” Aiden agreed. “Clever plan. I’m surprised your teachers let you stay in the student dorms.”

“…I wasn’t,” Jaskier finally chuckled. “You kidnapped me from the teacher’s quarters where they were letting me stay for the year as long as I helped teach the younger students.” He sighed. “…Well, whatever our plan, we should probably make camp. Preferably somewhere far away from here.”

Aiden nodded. “Stream back over to the east we could head for.”

Jaskier nodded, taking one step before his legs buckled under him.

Aiden’s arm was around him immediately, lifting him up. “Right. You might not be injured but you’re definitely traumatized. Come on, let’s get you somewhere away from this death and get the blood washed off of you.”

Jaskier nodded shakily, relaxing into Aiden’s arms as Aiden carried him away.

The bard was still shaking when they made it to the stream, and Aiden set him down on a tree stump, looking him over for injuries before he pulled a cloth from his pack, wetting it in the stream before gently wiping away the blood covering Jaskier.

His instincts were purring, and he tried to shove them down, but it was *hard* now, in a way it hadn’t been before.

Because Jaskier wasn’t his contract anymore.

Because Jaskier was *still here,* and he *almost hadn't been.* The cat inside him just wanted to wrap around Jaskier, holding him closer and not letting anyone near him, ever again-

Well. Fuck.

This was a clusterfuck, wasn't it?

"…you're hurt," Jaskier pointed out as Aiden knelt by the stream to wash out the cloth.

Aiden turned back around, to find that Jaskier was now kneeling behind him, his finger gently tracing the gash on Aiden's arm.

"It's already healed," Aiden explained, moving the shirt to the side to reveal that his skin was now the pale pink of fresh healing. "Witcher."

Jaskier nodded, his fingers tracing gently over the skin. "…There's still a lot I don't know about you," he whispered.

"…Do you want to do something about that?"

Jaskier looked up, staring at him. "What…?"

Swallowing, Aiden turned so he was sitting on the ground next to the stream, facing Jaskier. "No illusion now. You can leave any time you want. Will you?"

Jaskier swallowed. "…I can leave… and you won't stop me…"

"I won't," Aiden agreed.

Jaskier nodded, then stood, picking up his bedroll from Aiden's things and setting it out. "…I want to sleep," he finally admitted. "Properly. Knowing that I'm safe."

"Nothing'll hurt you while I'm here," Aiden promised, and Jaskier nodded, laying down on the bedroll and closing his eyes.

"The rest can wait till morning," he decided, and Aiden admitted that this was probably the best he was going to get.

He set up camp around Jaskier, setting up the necessary bits for the fire and munching on his own food, setting his bag with food next to Jaskier's bedroll in case he woke up before Aiden.

All in all… that worked out far better than he had any reason to hope for.

Birds were chirping in the air, and if he focused, he could almost convince himself that he could smell the sea.

Jaskier opened his eyes, relaxing as the sun streamed down on him through the trees.

He could *definitely* smell breakfast though.

Glancing over, he saw that Aiden had caught them a few more rabbits overnight, and they were now roasting over a fire as Aiden stood, folding up his own bedroll.

“Good morning,” Aiden called over, grinning at Jaskier. “You slept for a while.”

Jaskier nodded, sitting up and stretching. “Tired,” he acknowledged, before yawning. *Fuck* but he’d needed that.

“Water?” Aiden asked, and Jaskier nodded.

Aiden picked up a waterskin, walking over, and Jaskier opened his mouth-

Wait-

He shut it immediately, blushing furiously and reaching for the waterskin only for Aiden to pull it back slightly.

“Oh?” Aiden asked, grinning his teasing grin. “Little lordling, I didn’t know you liked such things,” he commented, mock scandalized.

Jaskier’s blush just grew worse. “Just- hand over the water, would you?” he asked, wishing the ground would just open up beneath him and swallow him whole.

“You can say please,” Aiden teased, “or I can give it to you instead.” His voice dropped a bit as he said this, and Jaskier… *fuck.*

Some of the teasing dropped from Aiden’s voice as he stepped closer, mischief and something else sparking in those eyes. “What will it be, Jaskier?” he asked, and-

Oh, oh he wasn’t teasing anymore.

Jaskier slowly lowered his arm.

And opened his mouth.

Aiden stepped forward- almost *stumbling* forward, and uncapped the waterskin, gently holding it up to Jaskier’s lips.

Jaskier drank slowly, letting his eyes slip closed as he enjoyed the cool water, and he heard Aiden mutter a quiet “ *Fuck,* ” over his head.

After he was done, he pulled back, some of the water trickling down his face.

He lifted a hand to wipe it away, but Aiden stopped him with a hand on his wrist- not even *holding* him, just pausing.

“…may I?” Aiden asked, his eyes blown wide.

Jaskier debated it. He didn't know what he wanted from this. Didn't know what to make of any of what was happening.

…But he knew he wanted this.

He nodded, and a moment later Aiden's tongue was licking up the water from Jaskier's face, and Jaskier squeaked as he lost balance, falling back only to be caught by Aiden's arm.

" *Fuck,* " Aiden whispered, and Jaskier grinned a bit.

"I'd love to, but perhaps a bath first?"

Aiden pulled back sharply, almost shaking himself. "Right- right that- *fucking hell.* "

"So, you *didn't* mean to almost kiss me there?" Jaskier asked, and Aiden blinked, then turned away. "Hey- hey, sorry-"

"Don't-" Aiden stopped, frowning. "…I… *fuck.* Do you even know what…"

"I've had sex before," Jaskier scowled, unimpressed.

"That's not- this isn't *sex,* " Aiden tried, before sighing, and sitting down next to the fire where breakfast was still cooking. "It can be, but it's also-"

"Kink," Jaskier concluded for him. "You've said. And yes, I *do* know what kink is."

"Then you know this *isn't* how it's done."

"You mean the part where you kidnapped me, tied me up, and proceeded to use my kinks against me? You're right, that's not how kink is supposed to work."

Aiden stared at him. "…I'm sorry."

"Damn right you should be sorry, kinks are supposed to be treated with something approaching respect, not-"

"For all of it," Aiden interrupted, his tone unusually somber as he stared at his hands. "I'm sorry I kidnapped you. I'm sorry I was such an ass to you at first. I'm sorry I let you get injured- that I handed you over to those bastards at all- I'm sorry I teased you about your praise kink- all of it."

Jaskier shrugged. "Apology accepted. Now. What next? Because it *seems* like you want to Dom me."

Aiden swallowed, clenching his hands. *Not* saying anything.

"You do then," Jaskier concluded.

After several moments, Aiden shakily asked: "Do you… want me to?"

"I think after *that* it's pretty clear that I want you to."

“Your body wants it, that doesn’t mean *you* want it-“

“I want it,” Jaskier finally cut him off. “I figured out pretty quickly that your whole ‘you’re not special, you’re just a contract’ thing was you trying to *distance* yourself- don’t even start, you’re not as good a liar as you think- and…” Jaskier cut himself off now, trying to find the right words. “You… fuck it- whatever I say is what’s going to get said- you *feel right.* The way you hold me- the way you *talk* to me- even when you’re trying to get a rise out of me, it’s still fucking addicting- I’ve been trying to find someone in Oxenfurt who could get me *half* as close to the amount of calm I feel when you’re actually *trying.* Even if it’s just for an evening, I want to see what happens.”

Aiden seemed to sag with relief. “So. One evening. I can do that. We’re close to Caelf. We could get a room there? You could get that bath you wanted, and… if you wanted to part ways after, you’d have your pick of possible travel companions.”

Jaskier chuckled. “’if I want to part ways’ are you saying you don’t?”

Aiden’s lips twitched, and he turned back to the food, pulling the cooked rabbits away from the fire, handing one of the sticks to Jaskier. “…I… you should know. You should have all the information if we’re doing *anything.* Witchers… our instincts are stronger. We’re trained to ignore them, so you don’t have to worry, but… my instincts have pretty much insisted that I protect you. To make up for what happened. For- what I did,” Aiden corrected.

Jaskier tilted his head, still waiting for the food to cool down. “Is that the only reason?” he asked, teasing.

“…The only one I’m willing to talk about right now.”

Jaskier nodded. “Right. I can work with that. Anything else I should know?”

Aiden swallowed. “…Cats are considered crazy, by most Witchers. Including us.”

“You are many things, but you are *not* crazy,” Jaskier insisted. “I’ve lived with crazy. You’re not it.”

“I really am,” Aiden tried to argue, but Jaskier shook his head.

“Well then if you are, it’s not the dangerous kind. I mean- you *are* dangerous, you’re just not dangerous to *me*- unless you leave me alone but that’s less you being dangerous and more nature being dangerous- I should stop talking now.”

Aiden chuckled. “…No one else would be comfortable traveling with me, after what I’ve done.”

“Well then,” Jaskier grinned, “I guess I must be crazy too.”

Chapter End Notes

...I write smut slowly, apparently. Because I'm editing and I realized they don't even KISS till chapter 13. They're just TALKING about sex.
Anyway, see you in the next chapter!

Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

Jaskier gets to shine

Chapter Notes

More teasing and conversations this chapter, hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The inn they entered fell completely silent, and Jaskier shifted a bit, suddenly uncomfortable.

Yes, he'd been in the woods for a week, but he didn't think he smelled *that* bad.

"Witcher," the innkeeper scowled, and Jaskier turned to look at the man.

"And bard," he spoke up, before Aiden could say anything. "Sorry for the mess, we ran into trouble just outside of town- could you-"

"Trouble follows Witchers everywhere they go," the innkeeper spat- *literally spat*- and Jaskier narrowed his eyes, before deciding that he *wasn't* going to be nice.

"So does pissing off a professor from Oxenfurt- which is what you're doing now. We need a room and a bath. Are you going to accept our coin or am I going to be writing back to Oxenfurt to inform them of your establishment? I'm sure the headmaster would be *delighted* to hear about the way his professor was treated while in this city- this *is* home to one of the four major bardic events of the season, is it not?"

The innkeeper paled. "…I can get you a room," he muttered, subdued.

"See that you do." As the man went to grab a key, Jaskier turned to see Aiden staring at him in wonderment. "What?"

"Did you just… threaten him?"

Jaskier smiled, sweeping his weathered doublet to the side, revealing where he'd stashed *another* of Aiden's knives he'd managed to knick. "No, *this* would be threatening him. I was simply informing him of the consequences of certain actions. Nothing more."

Aiden smothered a laugh, and the innkeeper returned, handing a key across as Aiden set down far too many coins.

Jaskier accepted the key, pulling Aiden upstairs till they were out of sight of the innkeeper. "Why did you pay him so much?" Jaskier asked, and Aiden arched an eyebrow at him.

"That's how much it costs as a Witcher."

Jaskier grimaced. "…Alright, I'm starting to see why you would take that contract. We'll need to work on that."

"We?"

Jaskier didn't respond, instead opening the door to their room, closing it behind him and tilting his head. "Well. Only one bed, but I don't think either of us were really planning on using two this evening, so that should be alright. So tell me: why did you just use my abduction money for that?"

Aiden *winced.* "…I… it feels wrong having it. So if I have to spend it, might as well be on things that help you."

Jaskier sighed, shaking his head. "…I'm not selfless enough to object to that. But really- I don't need much. Another shirt, maybe, since this one is ruined? But I can't think of anything else."

"That's because you've never walked the path before," Aiden pointed out. "It gets expensive."

Jaskier nodded the point, then looked over as someone knocked.

He opened the door, letting in the people carrying the bath and buckets of hot water- or, *lukewarm* water as it turned out.

They left, and he sighed as he filled the tub. "Plenty of water, but it'll be cold before either of us really have a chance to use it."

"Here," Aiden offered, doing something with his hands and steam began rising from the tub.

Jaskier blinked, and dipped his fingers into the water.

Almost scalding.

"That's useful," he commented, quickly pulling his finger back and shaking it to cool it, "but it's a bit… hot."

Aiden winced. "Sorry, Witcher preference. It should cool off in a little bit."

"…Or you could take the first bath," Jaskier pointed out. "Since it's your perfect temperature. And it'll be cool enough for me to bathe when you're done. Or- at least, if you heat up the water in the buckets the same way, it will be."

Aiden nodded. “That could work.”

As Aiden prepped the water and started stripping off his clothes, Jaskier took the opportunity to look him over, taking in the details of the Witcher properly.

He was covered in scars from his various hunts, but beneath those scars lay muscles Jaskier had only ever seen on soldiers and mercenaries, and never in such detail.

A part of him wanted to lick his way up those abs, and another part wanted Aiden to pin him down and shove his gorgeous cock into him-

“Enjoying the view?” Aiden asked as he slipped into the water, and Jaskier chuckled, coming closer until he could kneel next to the tub.

“… *Fuck* you’re beautiful,” Jaskier whispered, and Aiden grinned, reaching up a wet hand to swipe away some of the dirt from Jaskier’s face.

“Most people wouldn’t agree.”

“Most people are idiots.”

The laughter he got was worth it, and Jaskier felt himself begin to smile too. “You are a *delight* little bardling.”

Jaskier couldn’t tear his eyes away, his heart beating so quick he could swear it was coursing pure fire through his veins. The way Aiden’s eyes lingered on his lips, the way his black hair fell back to his shoulders in ringlets- his *smirk,* the way those lips barely parted to reveal too sharp teeth that Jaskier wanted to cut himself on-

Jaskier took a breath, pulling himself back, and Aiden did the same, splashing water into his face as Jaskier turned to the chair in the room.

“You… you should know, whatever attraction you might feel towards me- the last few days have made it stronger,” Aiden tried, clearing his throat.

“I know,” Jaskier agreed.

“And I don’t want to disappoint you, I know you’re probably- wait what?”

Jaskier looked over at him. “Fucking you would probably be a horrible idea. You kidnapped me, and then saved my life- and now I want to drop to my knees before you? I can barely keep my *eyes* off of you? It’s definitely a reaction to the stress and danger of the situation, and the euphoria of surviving. I’m not under any illusions here.”

“…Oh.”

“Which is why I’m *not* making decisions now,” Jaskier continued on. “I don’t know how I’ll feel when everything crashes. When my body realizes it’s not in danger, when I’ve had a chance to really think this through. And I’m probably screwing myself over from being able to make a rational decision when that happens, by fucking you now. But I still want to do it.”

This was apparently a new idea to Aiden, who sat in the tub, confused. “I…”

“You’re probably *also* experiencing a similarly heightened state,” Jaskier continued. “While it’s probably not as extreme, you were fighting for someone’s life- my own- and you can now relax, and having done so are prone to making rasher decisions until your body has realized both yourself *and* I survived what you likely believed to be a hopeless encounter-“

“How do you *know* these things?” Aiden asked, and Jaskier grinned.

“Master of the seven liberal arts, darling. Seven years of studying. Oxenfurt is the leading school in just about every area of study there is, not just music.”

Aiden blinked, settling back in the tub. “So… I think I got mixed up in there- you *do* want to fuck or you *don’t* ?”

“Oh I do,” Jaskier agreed, “I *definitely* do. But either this is going to make my body settle back into place far quicker, by establishing that it’s safe, or I’m going to push my body into such a state of panic that I have a breakdown. So. You should know what you’re getting into.”

“…I don’t think I’ve ever had anyone try to explain the science of why they want to have sex before.”

“You seem to be acting on a sense of full transparency for the moment, so I figured I’d join in,” Jaskier shrugged. “Just because I know *why* I feel attracted to you doesn’t mean it’s going to stop. It just means that we should both go into this fully aware we might not feel the same attraction in the morning.”

“So we’re aware we’re walking towards the illusion,” Aiden conceded.

“Exactly. We’ve both acknowledged there might not be an oasis there. But this is hardly a desert, and regardless if I’ll want it again past tonight, I *do* want this tonight. Do you… still want this?”

“I want this,” Aiden agreed. “We’re just… treating this as a single night of passion then?”

“Essentially,” Jaskier shrugged. “I’ve said my piece. Is there anything you want to say before we begin?”

Aiden finished washing up, and stood, and- oh, this might be an illusion he was walking towards, but it was a *glorious* illusion. And that cock was *very* real. “Yes, actually,” he grinned. “What’s your safeword?”

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter actually has touching and spicy stuff! Instead of just conversations.

Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

Aiden helps Jaskier bathe and they talk

Chapter Notes

The long awaited chapter

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jaskier swallowed, and Aiden smirked, watching the bard as he drew in a shaky breath. "… Lettenhove," he settled on, and Aiden blinked.

"Your home?" he asked as he began switching out the water from the bath.

"You know I'm escaping my parents, you can figure out why that would be my safeword," Jaskier admonished, standing up and starting to peel off the clothing from the path.

Hmm… Aiden should see about getting him that new shirt in the morning. Or maybe getting him one of his own shirts, he had a spare- and the thought of seeing the bard in *his* clothing-

Fuck.

The water from the buckets was in the bath again by the time Jaskier was finished pulling off his clothing, and Aiden got a chance to really look at him.

There wasn't much definition to his muscle yet, but what definition there was along his calves and forearms was strong, contrasting the slight chub around his thighs and stomach that said he was well fed, able to tend to himself. Aiden almost wanted to see it grow- to be the *reason* it grew- No. That was more time than he was allowed.

As Jaskier got into the water, leaning back and letting his head fall as he relaxed, Aiden found himself almost *pulled* to his side, wanting to kiss his way down that beautiful neck.

"Your safeword?" Jaskier asked, and Aiden took a breath, pulling his self restraint back into play.

"Archespore," he finally answered.

Jaskier nodded, his eyes still closed, and Aiden just wanted to wrap his hand loosely around Jaskier's throat, tilting his head further back to kiss him.

…He *knew* what Jaskier's neck felt like under his hand. Had felt it several times. But he didn't know what Jaskier's lips tasted like.

Dangerous.

Addicting.

"…What are your boundaries?" Aiden finally asked, clenching his hands to keep them by his side.

Jaskier opened his eyes and sat up, their blue somehow darker in the fading light.

He needed to light a candle, or start the fire going, but he couldn't tear his eyes away from Jaskier-

Fuck, the bard might have had a point. Aiden usually didn't feel *this* strongly about a possible partner-

Though.

Usually with the others, he didn't hold himself back. Lambert was always down to fuck, and Geralt and Eskel were as desperate for touch as he was most days, even if they didn't always want to go as far. And random strangers were either interested almost immediately, or telling him to fuck off.

"No gags," Jaskier shuddered as he picked up the soap and cloth to wipe away the grime of the road. "I think you'd already figured that out, but that's a hard line for me. Though- if you want to silence me with your own body, that might be alright. Consider that a softer limit. Ask first, of course, but I might be alright with it."

Aiden nodded. That made a *significant* amount of sense, given what he'd already learned. "Anything else?"

"Hmmm…" Jaskier set down the cloth and ducked beneath the water to try and wash his hair, and Aiden wanted to run his fingers through Jaskier's hair. Jaskier came up, shaking himself a bit. "Pain is alright, but don't do anything for the *sake* of pain- if that makes sense?"

"You're fine if something hurts, but it can't be the purpose of it? So no spanking, but if I kiss you, and I use teeth?"

Jaskier *shuddered,* the arousal that had been drenching the air growing as he grinned. " *Please* bite me," he asked, and Aiden's slim self control grew even thinner.

"Right now?" he asked, and Jaskier reached out a hand towards him.

A moment later Aiden was leaning over him, his hand cradling the back of Jaskier's head as he kissed him, the kiss filthy from the moment their lips met, Jaskier gasping into Aiden's

mouth as he nipped lightly at Jaskier's bottom lip, tugging it into his mouth as Jaskier moaned beneath him.

Fuck.

Aiden pulled back, breathing in Jaskier's arousal. "You're fucking addicting," he whispered.

"Bite me harder?" Jaskier asked, and Aiden complied, crashing their lips together again as he chased the taste of Jaskier on his lips, teeth clamping onto his lip for a moment, just shy of breaking skin as Jaskier *moaned,* relaxing into Aiden's grip.

Aiden soothed the bite with his tongue, delighted when Jaskier's own tongue hesitantly met his, and Aiden tilted his head slightly so he could tangle their tongues together, licking into Jaskier's mouth as Jaskier clung to him, and Aiden groaned at the taste of Jaskier.

He finally pulled back, letting Jaskier pant for breath, but still holding his head back, his fingers tangled in Jaskier's hair. "Is… is that what you meant?" Aiden asked, trying to catch his own breath. "Pain can't be the purpose… but possessiveness can?"

" *Yes,* " Jaskier groaned. "Please- *Fuck* be possessive of me, mark me, I don't care just don't let go-"

"Shhh," Aiden whispered, placing another gentle kiss to Jaskier's lips. "Shhh, oh, you're being such a good boy for me," he whispered, and Jaskier *melted.*

" *Fuck,* " Jaskier groaned. "Need-" he cleared his throat, "need to talk first," he whispered, his voice already wrecked and they hadn't even *started.* "Those are my hard lines, everything else- discuss first- yours?" he asked, and Aiden could guess what he meant.

"No insults," he whispered. "I get enough of that on the path, I don't need it here." At Jaskier's nod, he continued. "I… I don't think I can handle you fighting me, not today at least."

"Too close to what we just survived?" Jaskier guessed, and Aiden nodded. "Alright. Can I tug against any form of restraints? Not trying to get out, just testing them?"

Aiden nodded. "That should be fine."

"If it isn't, just tell me?" Jaskier asked.

"Of course. Other than that… just discuss things first," Aiden summarized, and Jaskier nodded. "…Can I take care of you?" he asked, and Jaskier pulled in a breath, before nodding again.

"Please."

Aiden reached over, picking up the soap cloth from where Jaskier had discarded it earlier and shifting till he was at Jaskier's back, gently pushing him forward till he could get at Jaskier's back, gently running the cloth up and down Jaskier's back, bathing him carefully.

"…I must admit, that's not where I thought you'd start," Jaskier finally said. "With full permission to do just about anything you wanted to me… bathing is a tad… unexpected."

"Just starting here," Aiden murmured, enjoying the feel of Jaskier's skin beneath his hands. "I want to tend to you. Bathing- and *scent*- is a part of that."

At least that earned him a chuckle. "Are you saying I smell?" Jaskier asked, moaning a bit as Aiden pushed a little harder on his shoulders, setting down the cloth in favor of massaging the tension there.

Aiden leaned closer, till his lips were right next to Jaskier's ear. "I'm saying I want you to smell like *me,* " he whispered, before gently nipping his ear.

" *Fuck,* " Jaskier startled, grasping the side of the tub even as Aiden grinned. "Please, oh *fuck* yes."

"Mmm," Aiden pulled back, picking the soap cloth up again. "So. We've covered what *not* to do," Aiden whispered, pulling Jaskier back against the tub so he could wrap his arms around him from behind, running the cloth over his chest. "What do you *want* me to do?"

"P-praise me, *please,* " Jaskier begged. "Tie me up or hold me down, whatever you *want!* " he moaned as Aiden ran the cloth over his nipple, pressing down a bit harder than he had to and making Jaskier squirm. "Mark me as yours. I want to see your bruises on me in the morning- not from before, but from *this.* From me *choosing* this- *please* mark me as yours-"

"Shhh," Aiden whispered, draping a hand over Jaskier's eyes and holding him, his head leaned back against Aiden's shoulders. "Be a good boy and quiet down, alright?" he whispered, and Jaskier nodded beneath his hand, completely quiet.

The *power* he held right now was intoxicating, but he had a responsibility to Jaskier at the moment. "Take a deep breath for me?" he asked, and Jaskier did, drawing in a ragged breath as Aiden let his free hand trace meaningless patterns across Jaskier's chest, helping him to stay tethered to the moment. "Very good. Now let go for me?" As Jaskier breathed out, Aiden slowly let his hand fall away from his eyes, settling lightly against Jaskier's neck instead. "Very good. I appreciate your enthusiasm, but let's leave the begging for later, shall we? I'll take care of you. What else do you want me to do? Calmly now."

Jaskier took another breath, letting it slowly out as he looked up at the ceiling. "…This. Just… holding me. Taking charge. I… I want to bring *you* pleasure- Whether through sucking your cock or letting you fuck me, or me fucking you- I want…" There was a subtle scent entering Jaskier's smell now, of desperation and something… *empty.* "I want to be *wanted,* " Jaskier finally admitted, and there were tears gathering in his eyes.

Aiden tightened his grip on Jaskier's neck, just slightly, pulling him closer. "You are wanted," Aiden whispered. "I want you. Oh, the ways I want you. Fuck, it's addicting. *You* are addicting, Jaskier." With every word, he watched as that desperation and tension eased from Jaskier, leaving him pliant in Aiden's arms, his head still tipped back on Aiden's shoulder.

After another moment, Jaskier swallowed, licking his lips. “Well, that’s me. What do you want from me?” Jaskier asked.

“Tonight, I want you to be here. Be mine *to* mark. I want to hold you close, want to ravage you, want to let my instincts loose, and I want you to welcome it.”

Jaskier smiled. “I will welcome anything you want to give me,” he whispered, and Aiden *knew* that it was just the scene, knew there were limits he couldn’t push.

But that illusion was fucking beautiful.

“Right now, I want to finish bathing you, then I want to bring you off in the water,” Aiden whispered, and Jaskier *moaned.*

“ *Please,* ” he begged, and Aiden chuckled against his ear, sliding his hands beneath the water as he gently rubbed the cloth further down, then back up again, teasing gently as Jaskier took careful, measured breaths.

Aiden shifted out from behind Jaskier, keeping a hand on him at all times as he angled himself better so he could gently lift Jaskier’s leg up, washing it off thoroughly as Jaskier jolted and shivered, holding himself so *beautifully* still for him.

“You’re being so good,” Aiden purred, “just a little longer, alright?”

Jaskier nodded hastily, biting his lip and keeping back the sounds.

Aiden moved around the tub to the other side, before reaching out and gently tugging Jaskier’s lip away from his teeth. “Now then, that’s my job,” he purred, before kissing Jaskier once more, nipping gently at Jaskier’s lips and swallowing the sounds from his mouth.

He pulled back, only for Jaskier to follow him, kissing him desperately as he rested a hand on Aiden’s shoulder to steady him.

Aiden indulged him for a moment, before pulling back again, halting Jaskier with a hand on his chest. “Just lie back and let me care for you,” Aiden instructed, and Jaskier slowly sank back, nodding.

Fuck. He was trusting him with so much.

Aiden carefully finished bathing Jaskier’s other leg, before he set the cloth to the side, instead trailing his fingers along Jaskier’s skin.

Jaskier shuddered, his fingers clenching and unclenching where his hands remained at his side under the water, and Aiden tilted his head, just observing him as he continued to draw meaningless circles with his fingers along the inside of Jaskier’s thigh.

“Fucking- *please,* ” Jaskier begged, and Aiden leaned closer, moving his hand higher, till he was almost to Jaskier’s hip.

Still *carefully* avoiding Jaskier’s cock.

“Please what?” he drew out, almost purring as he extended his fingers *just enough* to brush against Jaskier’s cock under the water, only to pull away again as Jaskier cried out, his hands coming to clench against the rim of the tub, holding on as he took careful breaths.

“Please- please touch me,” Jaskier begged, his eyes closed, slight tears gathering, but the room was full of the smell of pure arousal, and he hadn’t used his safeword yet.

Aiden leaned closer to him, now tracing the pattern with three fingers. “I *am* touching you,” Aiden pointed out, delighted when Jaskier whimpered.

“Please- *please* Aiden! Fucking- make me cum,” he begged.

Aiden *grinned.* “Of course I will. I can think of nothing better to do with this evening. In fact- I wonder… with you *this* wound up… could you come without a hand on your cock at all? I can be patient.”

“Oh for fuck’s sake,” Jaskier almost sobbed, his head falling back as Aiden continued to tease him.

He opened his eyes, the blue shining through the tears as he *beseeched* him. “Please- *please* touch my cock,” he begged, “ *Please*- “ He slammed a hand over his mouth as Aiden did precisely that.

“All you had to do was ask,” Aiden chuckled, his fingers stroking along Jaskier’s cock, the water soothing the way as he stroked Jaskier, his fingers tightening around him as they moved faster and faster.

Jaskier whimpered beneath his own hand, and Aiden took the other hand, entwining their fingers and holding him steady as Jaskier fell to pieces beneath Aiden’s hand, arching into Aiden’s touch with a muffled cry as he came.

Aiden slowed down, stroking Jaskier through his orgasm as he held him close.

“…Beautiful,” he whispered, and Jaskier’s fingers tightened in his hand. “…Come on darling, let’s get you dry. There’s a long night ahead for the both of us.”

Chapter End Notes

More still to cum :)

Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

Aiden finally fucks Jaskier

Chapter Notes

Get ready for 3k words of smut!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

We have a long night ahead for the both of us.

Jaskier just wanted to stay in Aiden's arms as he carried him from the bath to where he'd somehow found time to set a towel out, and gently settled Jaskier on it.

Jaskier whimpered as Aiden tried to pull away, and he heard Aiden chuckle next to him, coming back to wrap his arms around him again. "Can you look at me, bardling?" he asked, and Jaskier tried hard to blink his eyes open. "There you are. Beautiful."

Jaskier smiled, his chest warm from the praise. "…Where…"

Aiden frowned a moment. "…We're in the inn-" Jaskier shook his head, waving off *that* concern.

"Where did you… clothes- *towel,* " he finally managed, words struggling to leave his mouth.

"Oh," Aiden relaxed. "They brought them up with the buckets of water, you must not have noticed them earlier."

Jaskier nodded, relaxing back onto the towel.

It was surprisingly soft, and his eyes drifted closed as he enjoyed the afterglow.

"You're not falling asleep on me now, are you?" Aiden asked, and Jaskier shook his head.

"Just… takes a minute to come back," he whispered.

Already, he could feel that euphoric peace slipping away from him, and he took a deep breath, letting the cool air wake him up a bit. With two more breaths, he was properly alert

again, and he smiled up at Aiden. “Thank you,” he whispered, and Aiden smiled, brushing his hair away from his face.

“Of course, little bardling. Are you feeling better now?”

Jaskier snorted. “No, the orgasm’s faded. I don’t think there *is* a feeling better than orgasm.”

“Mmmm, you’d be surprised. But it is up there.”

“Really?” Jaskier sat up. “There’s a feeling *better* than orgasm? What?”

“…Knowing that everyone you care about is somehow, miraculously, still alive,” Aiden admitted quietly.

Jaskier swallowed. “…I thought we were leaving the past *out* of this,” he pointed out, and Aiden took a breath, letting it out again.

“I wasn’t talking about yesterday. Though, that was also relieving, knowing that you were safe. But being covered in blood isn’t terribly pleasant.”

Jaskier chuckled. “Well, we’re not covered in blood now, and I can think of some *very* pleasant things we could be doing…”

Aiden arched his eyebrow, pulling back a bit as he grinned. “Oh? Are you that eager already?”

Jaskier sighed, sitting up and trying to dry off with the towel, only for Aiden to stop him with a hand on his wrist. “…I want to care for you, this evening. *All* of you.”

Jaskier let go of the towel, shifting a bit so they could get it out from under him, then Aiden wrapped it around his shoulders, before grabbing another towel and kneeling before Jaskier, gently running the towel down Jaskier’s legs, drying him off.

It was *difficult,* sitting still while a gorgeous man knelt before him, his hands gently running down Jaskier’s legs as he ran the towel over him, drying him off, and then Aiden smirked up at him, before bowing his head and placing a gentle kiss to the tip of Jaskier’s cock.

“Oh *fuck,* ” Jaskier moaned, but Aiden was already moving on, standing up again and placing his hand behind Jaskier’s neck.

“Lean back for me?” he asked, and Jaskier obeyed, trusting his weight to Aiden as Aiden took the opportunity to dry Jaskier’s hair, the towel gently ruffling his head and absorbing the water still clinging there.

Before letting him up, Aiden ducked his head down and pressed a quick kiss to Jaskier’s neck, and Jaskier pulled in a quick breath but Aiden was *already moving on.*

Fuck, he was enjoying this! Teasing Jaskier so thoroughly, the cock.

When he was done, Aiden grinned, tossing the towel to the side as he angled Jaskier's head back with a grip on his hair, kissing him deeply.

Jaskier couldn't stop the whimper as Aiden's sharp teeth scraped over his lip once more, and he *knew* that lip would be swollen tomorrow, but he couldn't care. Fuck, he *wanted* it.

Wanted the marks Aiden would leave on him.

"You begged me to bite you," Aiden growled, the sound alone sending thrills down Jaskier's cock as it tried to rise once again. "Just on the lips?"

Jaskier shook his head as much as he could with Aiden's fingers still tangled in his hair. "Just- not my cock, but anywhere else."

Aiden's grin grew, sharp and feral, and he tugged Jaskier back with the hand on his hair, holding him steady as he lowered Jaskier onto the bed, climbing on after him till he was straddling Jaskier's hips.

He placed another kiss to Jaskier lips, pulling back before Jaskier could kiss him back, instead pressing a kiss to the underside of Jaskier's jaw as Jaskier *shuddered.*

Then Aiden kissed his way down Jaskier's neck, till finally *biting* at the base of his throat as Jaskier arched up into him, held still by Aiden's bulk on top of him.

Aiden pulled back and *groaned,* and Jaskier opened his eyes to see that the pupils in Aiden's eyes were blown wide, till all he could see was a sliver of green around them.

"…You look like a cat," Jaskier chuckled, and Aiden *grinned.*

"I am a cat," he pointed out.

"Are there that many similarities?"

Instead of responding, Aiden *purred,* and Jaskier gasped in delight. "You can do that whenever you want?"

"Eh," Aiden shrugged. "I have to be in a good mood. But then yes."

"Oh? And you're in a good mood now?" Jaskier teased.

He gasped as Aiden's hand wrapped snugly around his throat. "I have a beautiful man in my bed, letting me do what I want to him. I'm in a *very* good mood."

Jaskier pulled in a breath, feeling Aiden's fingers tighten against his throat, settling something deep in his chest. "Please," Jaskier whispered, and a moment later Aiden was kissing the word from his lips, chasing the sound with his tongue.

Jaskier opened his mouth, and let himself be devoured.

When Aiden pulled back, the room was glowing softly, and Aiden was staring at him in wonder. “Fuck… I want to see you cry with pleasure,” he whispered, and Jaskier let his eyes slipped closed as he nodded.

“ *Fuck* that sounds amazing.”

Aiden rolled off of him, and Jaskier reached out only for Aiden to lift him carefully, pulling him back towards the headboard until he was laying on Aiden’s chest, Aiden curled around him. “This alright for you, bardling?” he asked, and Jaskier just nodded.

“This one of your instincts you’ve been mentioning?” he asked, and Aiden chuckled, wrapping his arms around Jaskier from behind, before pressing a kiss to the base of Jaskier’s neck, causing him to shiver.

“Mmmm. We’re very tactile.”

“I can *tell*- “ the last word was more of a choked off sound than a word as Aiden’s fingers pinched sharply at Jaskier’s nipple, before rubbing it gently to soothe away the pain.

He reached his own hands down, clenching them on the sheets as Aiden continued to trace his fingers along Jaskier’s chest, exploring his body through touch as he kissed and bit his way along the back of Jaskier’s neck, leaving marks Jaskier *knew* he would carry for days.

After one rough bite along his spine had him arching up, almost coming untouched, Aiden shifted slightly, laying Jaskier back onto the pillows as Aiden wrapped around his side. He curled himself around Jaskier, tracing those same meaningless patterns against the skin of Jaskier’s hip as he pressed gentle, meaningless kisses to Jaskier’s shoulder.

Jaskier pulled in several breaths, and Aiden sighed wistfully. “So beautiful,” he whispered, and Jaskier shuddered under the praise. “You’re being such a good boy for me, staying so still for me. It makes me want to keep you forever.”

Of course the asshole had figured out that part.

Jaskier shuddered, eyes slammed closed as tears of pleasure and want beaded in their corners.

He gasped as a warm tongue licked up his tears, and Aiden chuckled. “Absolutely beautiful. But I want to see if I can make you cry from nothing but pleasure.”

He paused, and Jaskier hastily nodded his consent.

“Mmmm,” Aiden purred again, before reaching over Jaskier’s head for something.

Jaskier blinked, trying to focus on the present, but everything was getting fuzzier.

“I need verbal consent, darling.”

It took him a few moments to find his voice again, having to take a few deep breaths before his throat wanted to work. “Please,” he finally managed, and Aiden grinned, before slipping

away from Jaskier's side, keeping a hand on Jaskier's body as he slid down, before kneeling between Jaskier's legs.

"You're just beautiful everywhere, aren't you love?" Aiden asked, and Jaskier *blushed,* covering his face with his hands only for Aiden to tug them away, pushing Jaskier's wrists against the bed, his own arms caging Jaskier in as he loomed over him. "Keep your hands here," Aiden ordered, and Jaskier swallowed, nodding.

"…Yes sir," he whispered, and Aiden's grin grew feral.

"Oh, now *that* I could stand to hear again, little bardling. Do you think you could do that?"

Jaskier grinned right back. "Do what, sir?" he asked, and Aiden *laughed.*

"Oh you're cheeky, eh?" Aiden pulled back, staring Jaskier down. "Be a good boy, and keep your hands where they are."

Jaskier nodded, twisting his fingers in the sheets to anchor himself as Aiden returned to where he was knelt between Jaskier's legs.

He jolted as Aiden ran his hands up and down his thighs, the pressure too deep to tickle him, but an unusual sensation nonetheless. "…Sir?" he asked, and Aiden paused, purring.

"Yes?" he asked, that teasing lilt back in his tone.

Jaskier swallowed. "Please… please don't tease me," he asked, and Aiden nodded.

"Hmm… I suppose I have been dragging this out a bit," he conceded, before reaching for what he'd picked up earlier.

A vial of oil.

Jaskier shuddered, letting his head fall back onto the pillow, instead feeling the sensations as Aiden's hand left his skin for a moment, returning slick with oil as he traced along Jaskier's cock, then gently fondling his balls, before sliding further down till they pressed against his ass, one finger gently applying pressure. "Is this what you wanted?" Aiden asked, and Jaskier nodded hastily.

"Please," he begged, and Aiden chuckled, before slowly pressing in, taking his time as Jaskier did his best to relax.

"You're being so good for me," Aiden growled, his other hand clenching on Jaskier's hip, holding him steady. "Fuck, I can't wait to get inside you, can't wait to feel you clenching against me. Are you going to squeeze me tight? Fuck, I can't wait."

Jaskier nodded, whimpering as Aiden added a second finger in alongside the first. "Yes, sir," Jaskier agreed easily, and Aiden *moaned.*

"Fucking *addicting,* " he groaned, and Jaskier's thighs clenched as he tried to hold still, pleasure curling through him at the praise. "Of course you love that, don't you?" Aiden

asked, “love knowing how much you drive me mad. Fuck, *be* my madness,” he growled, and Jaskier cried out as Aiden bit down on the inside of his thigh.

Fuck.

Pleasure was already building in his chest, and Aiden hadn’t even begun fucking him yet. This was going to *ruin* him.

And to the ruins of his life he would *happily* go if it meant he never had to give this up.

Aiden’s fingers sped up inside him, the stretch growing once again- had he added another finger? Jaskier couldn’t tell anymore, all he knew was that he never wanted this to end but he could *feel* his own release drawing nearer.

“Sir,” he gasped, “sir- too close,” he managed, and Aiden slowed down, keeping his fingers still inside but barely moving them anymore.

“Good boy,” he whispered, “thank you for telling me. Such a good boy you’re being.”

Oh, fuck that fucking *praise.*

“Take a deep breath for me,” Aiden said, his fingers stilling completely. “ *Very* good. Now let it out again, good… very good darling. Wonderful. Do you need to stop?”

Jaskier shook his head. “No- no I would have safeworded if I needed to stop. Just… don’t want to come too soon.”

“Awww, am I that attractive to you?” Aiden teased, and Jaskier let out a breath, shaking his head in fondness as he chuckled.

His fingers were still clenched next to his head, tangled so tight in the sheets that he almost couldn’t feel them anymore. And of course, Aiden noticed. “Alright, let go of the sheets,” Aiden encouraged, lifting his free hand up to help Jaskier unclench them, and Jaskier was glad he hadn’t pulled out yet.

Aiden’s fingers inside him felt like the only thing stopping him from falling apart at the moment.

Once Jaskier’s fingers were untangled, Aiden brushed his thumb over Jaskier’s cheek. “I appreciate you following orders, but don’t hurt yourself over it. I want you to place your hands on my shoulders, and hold on there, alright? I’ll feel it if you’re about to hurt yourself.”

Jaskier nodded, settling his hands on Aiden’s shoulders. “Thank you sir,” he whispered, and Aiden smiled gently down at him.

“You are *very* welcome. Now are you ready to continue? Or do you need more time?”

“Continue,” Jaskier nodded, gasping as Aiden twisted his fingers inside of him. “ *Fuck!* ”

“Almost,” Aiden promised, continuing to stretch him, “we’re almost there. Do you think you’re stretched enough to take me?” he asked, and Jaskier nodded.

“I am, I am- *please,* ” he begged, and Aiden slowed down again, giving a few more thrusts before he pulled his fingers out.

He grabbed the oil, careful to stay within Jaskier’s reach as he poured some more out, slicking his cock with it before pressing forward, slowly stretching Jaskier open.

Jaskier clung to Aiden’s shoulders, desperate to stay tethered as Aiden filled him up, pressing against everything inside of him. “ *Fuck* you feel so good,” Aiden groaned as Jaskier whimpered, trying to draw breath even as his lungs insisted there was no room for it. “You’re clenching down on me so well,” Aiden praised and Jaskier did his best to tighten his muscles intentionally, pleased when Aiden muttered what sounded like a swear.

He’d have to ask him later what language that had been.

The last few inches almost *slammed* into place and Jaskier sucked in a breath, fingers clenching again on Aiden’s shoulder as Aiden shuddered, gasping for breath. Jaskier could feel his lips twitching into a smile, the pleasure of the evening overwhelming him as he shuddered.

“Do you have *any* idea how gorgeous you are?” Aiden asked, causing Jaskier to flush bright red. “You are, *fuck* you’re one pretty bard,” he whispered, before catching Jaskier’s wrists with his hands, pressing them down either side of Jaskier’s head once more. “Gorgeous bard, all mine to fuck.”

Jaskier had never realized how desperately he wanted someone to be possessive of him.

He was learning a lot of things about himself.

Gently straining against Aiden’s grasp he was pleased to find no give, whatsoever, and he melted a bit more at that.

“Ready?” Aiden asked, and Jaskier nodded.

“Fuck me already,” he grinned, arching as Aiden did just that, pulling back and thrusting back in with a strength Jaskier had never experienced before. It was *perfect.* Powerful thrusts that would have rocked Jaskier up the bed had Aiden not been pinning him in place, pressing his hands against the sheets as he pressed kisses and bites along Jaskier’s neck, the room echoing with Jaskier’s moans and Aiden’s growls.

Aiden was *so close* to where Jaskier knew his pleasure was, and he shifted slightly, planting his feet on the bed to angle where Aiden was-

Jaskier’s breath left him with a cry as Aiden hit the spot, relentlessly driving into it now that he’d been shown where it was.

“ *Fuck,* are you going to show me all your secrets?” Aiden asked, grinning as he grunted, his thrusts picking up speed. “Show me- show me where to please you? I barely have to do any

of the work."

Jaskier couldn't string together words, just clenching his fingers as he tried to clench down on Aiden, arching up to try and catch his lips in another kiss. One that Aiden *happily* gave him, grinning as his teeth scraped along Jaskier's lips again, threatening to break skin as he-

Jaskier *squeaked* as Aiden rolled them over, laughing in delight as he found himself on top of Aiden, who pushed Jaskier's arms behind his back, holding them in place with one hand as he slowed his thrusts. Each thrust turned teasing and arduous as he took advantage of the new position to bite marks into Jaskier's chest, laving Jaskier's nipples in turn with his tongue as Jaskier panted, whimpers and moans escaping his mouth every thrust.

"Come on," Aiden growled as he grasped Jaskier's hip with his other hand, each thrust hitting deeper as he seemed to push further into him. "Come on bardling," another bite to his nipple, this one sharp as it *wrenched* a cry from Jaskier's chest. "Come on, cry for me as you come."

The sudden hand around his cock was what sent him over the edge and he *screamed* as he came, muscles tightening like a lutestring about to snap as Aiden quickened his pace once again, fucking into Jaskier until he came, shuddering as he found his release in Jaskier.

Through the afterglow, he could *feel* himself being moved, gentle hands guiding him to lying down on his side, a gentle hand stroking over his face, before gently rubbing his wrists.

He floated for a while, until sense began to come back properly, and he found Aiden had curled himself around Jaskier, holding him close.

"There you are," he whispered, then the next thing he knew there was a cup with water being pressed against his lips. "Drink, your mouth must be dry."

Jaskier obeyed, swallowing down the cool liquid as lucidity returned, and the room seemed to settle.

"You drop hard," Aiden commented, and Jaskier nodded. It had been remarked upon before. "I wonder if that's why axii hit you so hard."

"Axii?" Jaskier asked.

"The… mind control, that I used when…" Aiden trailed off, and Jaskier nodded.

"When you kidnapped me, right."

It was… interesting, to think about. That only a little over a week ago, Aiden had been at his back not to tend to him after sex, but to kidnap him.

He *still* wasn't sure what he felt about it all, but he was decently sure he was closer to an answer than he had been at the start of the night.

He yawned, and Aiden chuckled. "Get some sleep, bardling."

“Mmm… need a good nickname for you,” Jaskier muttered, curling into Aiden’s arms and drifting off to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter is a brief break from smut as they have more conversations. But then we will be back to more smut.

Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

Jaskier and Aiden discuss plans

Chapter Notes

A brief break from the smut

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The sun was already risen by the time Jaskier woke up again, Aiden's arms still wrapped tight around him.

He sighed in contentment, relaxing further into Aiden's arms even as Aiden chuckled.

"Good morning Jaskier," Aiden whispered, and Jaskier smiled. "Happy?"

" *Very,* " Jaskier almost purred. "I just spent a very pleasant night in the arms of a handsome Witcher. Who wouldn't be happy?"

Aiden laughed, slipping out from behind Jaskier and sitting up.

Jaskier turned to watch him stretch, himself content to lie there for a few more minutes.

"Am I entertaining you?" Aiden teased, and Jaskier sighed in contentment.

"…Just… thinking. I do need to get back to Oxenfurt."

Aiden's brightness dimmed a little, but he nodded. "That… makes sense."

"Will you accompany me? Or are you going your own path?"

"You…" Jaskier grinned up at Aiden, who stared at him in wonderment. "You want me to go with you?" he whispered, as if saying the words would break them.

"My emotions are stable. I knew I wouldn't *regret* last night, but now I also know I enjoyed it *very* thoroughly, and am not opposed to a repeat- if you're interested, of course- but more than that, it would be *safer* traveling back to Oxenfurt with you. So. If you're still interested-"

“I am,” Aiden quickly reassured, and Jaskier relaxed.

“Then I would welcome your assistance. *Sir.* ”

“Cheeky,” Aiden grinned as he pinched Jaskier’s cheek, even as Jaskier swatted him away.

Jaskier just stuck his tongue out, then got up, stretching as he looked around. “…we should probably get some proper supplies before leaving- ugh, I should have tried to wash my shirt before we slept last night.”

He looked over as Aiden cleared his throat, to find Aiden handing him a black shirt. “… what?”

“It’s… one of my spares. We can get you your own before we leave, I just thought you might…”

He trailed off, and Jaskier smiled, reaching over and kissing Aiden’s cheek. “Thank you,” he whispered, before accepting the shirt and tugging it over his head, finding it to be *remarkably* soft.

“…Why do Witchers wear all black? Isn’t it an expensive color?”

“Monster ichor,” Aiden explained as he got dressed. “Any shirt we wear will be black before the season is out from the stuff, so when we need a new shirt we harvest some monster ichor so we can dye it immediately. It also helps denote us as Witchers. Still, not all of us wear all black. Eskel, one of my lovers, he has a red vest he takes great care with. I’ve never seen him get a stain on it.”

“That’s impressive.”

“He really is.”

He sounded so wistful, Jaskier tilted his head, smiling at him. “Tell me about your lovers?” He started getting dressed on his own, and Aiden smiled as he talked.

“There’s Geralt. Clever bastard, but he keeps his words to himself so you wouldn’t know it till you get some white gull in him- Witcher alcohol,” he explained. “Fiercely loyal too- well. All of them are. Comes with being Wolves.”

“Are Cats not as loyal?” Jaskier asked.

Aiden shrugged. “We’re… sneakier. Someone pisses off a wolf, they’ll get all intimidating and deal with the problem head on. Doesn’t always work. Someone crosses a Cat…”

“Then you’ll pretend to work with them, till sneaking me a dagger and killing them all?” Jaskier asked, and Aiden chuckled.

“Something like that, yeah.”

“…When did you decide to go back on the contract?”

"I *didn't* go back on the contract. The contract was complete."

"Aaah, right, because the contract said nothing about not killing *them* after the job was done," Jaskier conceded, starting to get an idea for how Cats thought. "But when did you decide to save me?"

Aiden sighed. "…After you were poisoned by the viper. I know you noticed I was different after that." Jaskier nodded. "I…" he frowned, debating something in his mind. "…Full transparency. Full trust. I… saw your scars. Behind your ears."

Jaskier's stomach dropped.

Oh.

Those.

"…I recognized them," Aiden admitted. "Several of my brothers have similar scars. For different reasons, I'm sure, but…" he sighed. "Between that, and the way you called for your father… you were begging him to stop."

He vaguely remembered the nightmares he'd had during that whole incident. Remembered the times his father had locked the muzzle on him, shoving him into an empty closet because he was too loud. Too much. Too… *everything.*

"So… that's when you decided?" Jaskier asked, not even able to look at Aiden anymore, instead staring at his hands.

Aiden sighed. "…I knew I couldn't hand you over. I… *understood.* That who I thought you were, that's…" he paused for several moments, before continuing. "You were trying to escape him. And I'd fucked that up. I had to do something to fix it. So yes, that's when I decided that I wouldn't let them hurt you."

"But you were fine with it until then?" Jaskier finally looked up. "…why?"

Aiden took a seat on the bed, and now *he* was the one staring at his hands. "…You were right. That taking the contract was personal. I… there… there was another contract. Just a standard monster I had to kill. A duke hired me to get rid of a nest of harpies. But his son… well. I pissed off the bastard, and his father had me imprisoned. Lambert found me after three weeks."

Jaskier winced. It was, unfortunately, unsurprising.

"I'm sorry that happened," Jaskier whispered. "I… don't imagine you were treated well."

Aiden shook his head, sighing as he leaned back. "No. I wasn't. But that was the past. I'm sorry I thought you would be like that."

"I understand why you thought that," Jaskier conceded. "But now you know I'm not. Most people aren't."

“Eh,” Aiden tilted his head. “Not the only noble I had trouble with. But you’re right, *you* aren’t like that. Don’t act like a noble at all, really.”

Jaskier shrugged. “That’s because I’m trying very hard *not* to be. Third son, about to be a bard. Acting like a noble’s just a great way to piss people off.”

“See? My point exactly.”

Jaskier chuckled, before standing up and putting on the rest of his clothes. “Well then, what are we doing from here?”

Aiden stood up, gathering up his pack. “This morning we need to get you some proper supplies for travel, and then this afternoon we can head out, try to put some distance between us and Caelf before camping for the night.”

Jaskier grinned. “Mmm, and tonight? What will we be doing then?”

Aiden’s grin grew sharper, and he gripped Jaskier’s chin before pressing a kiss to his lips. “Whatever we want to,” he murmured, and Jaskier grinned back at him.

“Good.”

“But, before that,” Aiden continued, pulling away, “you desperately need more clothes. So, clothes, food, you already have a bedroll but you could do with a few more blankets…”

“Notebook,” Jaskier added, and Aiden tilted his head.

“Oh?”

“I’m a bard, I have to be able to write down my songs, and this week has given me *plenty* to sing about.”

The look of confusion and bafflement he got would have had him doubled over in laughter had it not also been rather sad. “You… *this* week?”

“Does that surprise you?” Jaskier asked. “I’ve been in the wild, with a Witcher, beset by wolves, snakes, monsters and men, and saved every time. Of course I’ll be inspired to write.”

He hadn’t thought Aiden’s confusion could grow any worse. He had been wrong. “That’s-that’s *not* how any of that happened! I dragged you *into* that mess!”

“A detail the audience doesn’t need to know about,” Jaskier grinned.

Aiden stood there with his mouth agape, completely flummoxed by the entire idea.

“Come now, surely by now you have to have realized that most of bards’ tales are simply fiction *based* in truth, right?” He grinned as Aiden continued to stare at him in confusion and wonder. “Come along now dear, I believe we have supplies to get,” he called as he walked out the door of their room.

Oh, this would be *fun*.

Chapter End Notes

Yes, they're still traveling together. For the moment.

Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

Conversations are held

Chapter Notes

No actual smut in this one, sorry

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jaskier looked *good* in Aiden's shirt.

He had half a mind to tell Jaskier to just not bother buying any other shirts, but that was the madness talking, and he needed to start pulling that back in.

It was hard, when he could still smell himself on Jaskier's skin. Could still see the gorgeous bruises lining his neck from Aiden's teeth-

"If you don't stop eye fucking me, we're going to get arrested for public indecency," Jaskier muttered under his breath, and Aiden smirked as he looked away, instead paying attention to their surroundings, and the people giving him a wide berth.

He almost had to stifle a laugh as he watched several people scowl at him and hastily look away, not paying any attention to Jaskier at all.

His bruises were on proud display, and no one was seeing them, too offended that a Witcher would dare to walk the same streets as them.

Still, as they slowly gathered the various materials they'd need for *comfortable* travel back to Oxenfurt, Aiden slowly began to let his instincts take over. Jaskier let him take over with almost all of the necessary supplies, only really voicing an opinion about the clothes he was getting, and a part of Aiden's conscious was eased when he spent more of the coin from the contract on supplies for Jaskier. Still, he hadn't even spent a tenth of the money by the time they had everything they could possibly need, and it was time to leave.

They set out the way they'd come, this time with Jaskier's pack on his back as he hummed, spinning in a circle every once in a while, to watch the various birds and bugs and clouds.

Aiden couldn't wipe the smile off his face as he watched Jaskier run about, pausing every few minutes to stare at some new marvel or fascination.

“Didn’t you have a chance to abate your curiosity in Oxenfurt?” Aiden asked. “I promise you the rabbits here aren’t any different.”

Jaskier waved him off as he crouched down, staring at the tiny baby rabbit that was staring up at him in wonder. “None this small,” he cooed gently, before reaching out a hand and sighing as it ran away from him. “They just look so soft and adorable.”

“Their pelts are,” Aiden agreed, earning himself a glare from Jaskier as he chuckled. “Peace, I won’t go for your baby rabbits. Never a good plan to eat the smaller version of anything unless you can’t find anything else. Leave them to grow up, and you can eat them in a few year’s time if you’re traveling through again.”

“That’s a horrible way to think about it,” Jaskier protested, catching up with Aiden. “They’re so cute and small!”

“And one day they’ll die and become someone’s dinner,” Aiden agreed.

“Oh, you’re horrible. Why do I put up with you?”

Aiden pretended to think about it. “Because… I’m keeping you safe on the road back to Oxenfurt? Because you wouldn’t make it ten miles without running into a rare monster that is supposed to only stick to the forests of Brokilon, but has made an exception to come hunt you in particular down, and you need someone who knows how to protect you?”

“It’s the sex,” Jaskier decided. “Can’t beat a good fucking.”

Aiden laughed, and Jaskier grinned. This was going to be a *fun* journey.

It wasn’t until they were setting up camp that Jaskier finally asked the question that had been on his mind the last few days. “Should we… do, something?”

“About what?” Aiden asked.

“The plot to kill king Vizimir.”

Aiden shrugged. “We did. We stopped them from cutting you up into little pieces.”

Jaskier sighed, setting down the firewood he’d been gathering. “I’m serious. Someone paid a thousand crowns for me, because they thought it could get them in the door to kill Vizimir. I don’t think the people we killed were the ones behind the plot.”

“Well, let me ask you this. Is it our responsibility to stop them if they try again?”

Jaskier blinked at him. “What do you mean? If someone’s trying to kill the king, he needs to be warned!”

“People try to kill kings every day,” Aiden pointed out. “That’s why they hire guards, and food tasters, to make sure no one succeeds.”

“But… but I’m a Redanian. And a noble at that- shouldn’t I try to do my duty and warn him?”

Aiden just shrugged. “If you feel that strongly about it, go ahead. I won’t stop you. I just don’t share your conviction. I’ve no loyalty to Redania, and I definitely have none to her king.”

Jaskier sighed, taking a seat on his bedroll. “…I’ll just… write him a letter, I suppose, when I get back. Telling him what happened… or maybe I should tell my parents-“ Jaskier cut off, grimacing. “…better not, actually. That couldn’t possibly end well.”

Aiden stared at him for a moment, before looking away, *clearly* holding back from asking a question.

Jaskier could guess the nature of the question. He probably shouldn’t poke at it… but he’d never been one for keeping in his curiosity.

“…You never asked,” Jaskier commented after sitting in silence for what was clearly too long for the bard’s comfort.

“About what?” But Aiden already knew the answer.

“My scars.”

“You’ve never asked about mine.”

Jaskier shook his head. “No, but that’s different, that’s- you got those doing your *job.* My scars are there because I was too…” he trailed off, looking down at his hands, that same scent of shame and misery filling the camp.

Oh.

Aiden crossed over to him before crouching down in front of Jaskier and gently lifting his head. “Jaskier,” he whispered. “You’re not too much. You’re not too loud, or too annoying, or any other horrible things your parents told you.” Jaskier was tearing up now, and Aiden just wanted to wrap him up in his arms and not let go. “You, young bardling, are amazing. Sharp and resourceful and kind- and if I ever meet your father I’m going to be having some very *painful* words with him.”

Jaskier chuckled at that, scrubbing the tears from his eyes. “…I don’t think that would go well for either of you,” he commented, and Aiden shrugged.

“Probably not. But I’ve been kicked out of more than enough towns to know that all bans they put in place only last as long as the monster is smaller than the offense. Witchers are hated, but we’re also *needed.* There’s little your father could do to me.”

“He could kill you,” Jaskier pointed out. “He’s a count. He’s powerful-“

“His guards could try to kill me,” Aiden corrected. “And they’re not Witchers. And they couldn’t catch up to me, either. I’ve taken more than a few contracts on nobles, I know how to get around guards.”

Jaskier chuckled, ducking his head. “…I suppose I don’t have to worry about you, do I.”

“You don’t. But it’s sweet that you do.” He paused, tilting his head. “ *You’re* sweet,” he whispered, smiling a bit as Jaskier blushed, and that subtle undercurrent of arousal came back.

After a moment, Jaskier cleared his throat. “You’re making a habit of this,” he commented, not looking at Aiden.

“A habit of what?” Aiden asked, reaching out to tilt Jaskier’s head back to look at him.

Jaskier swallowed, his eyes dilating as he stared at Aiden, and the scent of arousal slowly filling their camp. “…Distracting me with my kinks.”

Aiden grinned. “Do you want me to stop?”

Jaskier shook his head, and Aiden trailed his fingers along the underside of Jaskier’s jaw till he could gently wrap them around Jaskier’s neck. Jaskier swallowed, his throat pushing into Aiden’s hand.

Aiden held him there for a moment, before pulling back. “…After dinner,” he finally said, despite the small whine that escaped Jaskier’s mouth, that had Aiden wanting to chase after the sound with a kiss. “While it’s cooking, we can talk.”

He started setting things up, giving Jaskier a moment to gather himself once more. “…talk?” he finally heard Jaskier ask.

“About kinks. Last night was wonderful, but if this is going to become a more regular occurrence, we need to have a bit of a longer conversation.”

“What more can we cover than safewords and boundaries?” Jaskier asked, but he sounded… eager.

Good.

“Last night. What did you enjoy about it, and what can I do better?”

He glanced over, and Jaskier seemed surprised, but he was also considering it. Aiden had been half worried he’d have to coax Jaskier into giving him an honest answer, but it was good to see Jaskier was taking it seriously.

“…Well, clearly you’re aroused by tears. I’ll admit, that was… more arousing than I’d counted on. And I appreciated that when I needed to pause, you didn’t stop touching me entirely, you just stilled. That was… very helpful. In terms of what to do better…” Jaskier thought for a moment, before nodding decisively. “The… teasing. In the bathtub. I can enjoy teasing, but when… when I’m begging, don’t make me spell it out. Words… they get

difficult, when I'm that close. Having to chase the words to ask for what I want pulls me away from orgasm."

Aiden nodded. "I'll keep that in mind. Would you like me to instead have you use your words if I specifically need to pull you from that edge?"

"Hmmm…" Jaskier tilted his head, thinking. "…I'm not apposed to trying that. Now what about you? Any notes?"

"Mmmm… don't be afraid to disobey me for your own health, or to pause me, or anything. You were almost in pain last night, and I don't want that. I'll watch out for you as well, but don't push yourself too hard. This is for us to enjoy, alright?"

Jaskier nodded. "You said that last night too."

"I meant it. Now." He finished up with the food, and stood up, grinning at Jaskier. "What do you want to do tonight?"

Chapter End Notes

smut next chapter!

Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

Steamy times ahead

Chapter Notes

Am I CAPABLE of writing a short smut chapter? I don't think so.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

What do you want to do tonight?

Jaskier stared up at Aiden, thinking. There was so much he wanted to do, and wanted to try. Some of it, he still didn't know how to voice. But for right now…

"…Those later days, before you saved me from the people that hired you, but after I realized you weren't going to hurt me…"

Aiden arched an eyebrow, tilting his head slightly. "Not where I thought you'd start this conversation, but I suppose that makes sense. What about them?"

"…I said I'd rather you silence me with your cock than with that gag. Do you want to?"

From the way Aiden drew in a sharp breath, and his eyes went wide, Jaskier figured he had his answer.

After a moment, Aiden drew in another breath, before slowly letting it out again. "…Is that the only part of those nights you want to play with?" he asked, and Jaskier grinned as a thrill ran down his spine. "That's a no then… what else can I do to you?"

Fuck me, hunt me, breed me, I'll let you do anything to me as long as you never let me go.

Out loud, he responded: "…I want you to tie me up again, like you did before. None of that 'bound to help with the illusion' bullshit, bind my arms behind my back so I can't ignore it."

"I knew you were aroused by that," Aiden grinned, crouching down in front of Jaskier once more. "What else- no, wait, I have ideas…" he grinned as Jaskier closed his mouth, letting Aiden talk. "…I want to feed you again. With your hands tied behind your back, so you have to rely on me." Oh, that sounded wonderful. Aiden chuckled. "You're with me so far, good. More than that though… I want to kiss you. I want to steal the breath from your lungs and

give it back to you, pushing you closer to that beautiful headspace I know you can reach." Jaskier couldn't hold back the groan, and Aiden's grin just grew. "I want to fuck your mouth- but will you let me fuck your throat as well?"

Jaskier nodded quickly. " *Fuck yes.* "

Aiden reached out a hand, running a single finger down the column of Jaskier's neck. "I want to watch you choke on my cock. I want to praise you and shame you in equal turn- watch you squirm under me."

Fucking hell. "…Don't call me a brat, or lordling, or… any kind of 'lord'. But other than that, do whatever the *fuck* you want to."

"Oh I plan to… I want to see you kneeling in front of me, choking on me, tears in those gorgeous eyes of yours. I want to feed you, watch you swallow everything I give you. Food, water, my cock, all of it. *Fuck* you'd look so pretty, your throat trying so hard to keep up…" Aiden's fingers closed around Jaskier's throat, squeezing gently, and Jaskier felt his cock harden in his pants.

"Please," Jaskier whispered, his voice strained.

Aiden tugged him closer by the grip on his neck, kissing him soundly as Aiden shifted his hands, running them down Jaskier's shoulders, his arms, to his wrists-

And wrapping his fingers around Jaskier's wrists, pushing them behind Jaskier's back as they kissed.

Jaskier moaned, and Aiden licked into his mouth, pressing Jaskier's wrists together behind him and grasping them with one hand as the other came back up to the back of Jaskier's neck, holding him immobile as Aiden plundered his mouth. Their chests were pressed together along with their cocks, Aiden's length pressing against Jaskier's as he whimpered.

Aiden broke the kiss, pulling back a little before he grinned, tightening his fingers around Jaskier's hair and pulling his head back, forcing him to arch his neck.

"Beautiful," Aiden groaned, before scraping his teeth over Jaskier's neck. "My perfect little slut," he murmured, before pressing a kiss over where his teeth had just been.

Jaskier shuddered, and Aiden *purred.* "Please," Jaskier whispered, "please-"

"Shhh, I've got you," Aiden assured him, placing a gentle kiss to his jaw before letting go of his hair, instead reaching for his pack with one hand, grinning at Jaskier. "Look at you… already so desperate for it." He pulled out a length of silk rope he'd bought in town, and Jaskier's eyes widened. "I was wondering if I'd get to use this today," he purred, before chuckling. "I need you to promise you won't cut this one, alright little slut?"

Jaskier hastily nodded. "I promise," he said quickly. "Please, *please,* tie me up-" he cut off as Aiden kissed him, the silk of the rope cool and smooth against his cheek where Aiden was holding it as he held Jaskier still.

Aiden opened his mouth, his tongue pressing against Jaskier's and Jaskier opened his own mouth, groaning as their tongues tangled together.

Aiden slid his tongue teasingly against Jaskier's, pressing even closer till a piece of paper couldn't have fit between the two of them, Aiden's arms looped around Jaskier's as-

Jaskier gasped as he felt that cool silk wrap around his wrists, Aiden quickly tying the rope as he kept Jaskier distracted with his tongue down Jaskier's throat.

The rope tied tight, binding him, and Aiden pulled back, licking his lips as Jaskier gasped for breath.

"Oh, *such* a good boy for me," Aiden purred, sliding his hand down and squeezing Jaskier's ass tight as Jaskier jolted, dropping his head to Aiden's shoulder as he breathed through the arousal threatening to consume his mind. "Gods, you're fucking eager. Such a perfect slut."

"Mmmm," Jaskier managed in response, his head spinning as he tried to breathe normally.

"Good boy, letting me take care of you. Now stay here, I'll be back in a moment."

Jaskier bit back the whine as Aiden pulled back, but he was only moving to check on where he'd left the meat to cook.

A moment later, Aiden was back, kneeling in front of him again, tearing off a piece of meat and holding it up to Jaskier's lips.

Jaskier opened his mouth, letting Aiden press the food into his mouth with two fingers, and Jaskier gently closed his lips around Aiden's fingers, running his tongue along them before Aiden pulled his fingers out.

"Fuck," he whispered as Jaskier chewed on the food before swallowing it, and opening his mouth again, obediently waiting.

Aiden placed another piece of meat in, this time with three fingers, and he groaned as Jaskier diligently ran his tongue over each of them, before sliding his tongue between the fingers till Aiden pulled back again. "Such a perfect fucking slut," Aiden growled.

Jaskier smirked as he ate his portion of the meat, watching with interest as Aiden tore off some of the meat for himself, grinning as he tossed the food up, catching it in his mouth quickly.

Jaskier throat swallowed in time with Aiden's, and Aiden grinned at him. "I want to cover you in honey and lick it from your skin."

The noise that came from Jaskier's mouth would have embarrassed him had he not *already* been too far past embarrassment to care. "I don't think there's enough time to do everything I want to do with you," he admitted, and Aiden shrugged.

"Maybe not this evening. Or even on this trip. But I wouldn't mind seeing you around the continent."

“What, like a lover?” Jaskier asked, and Aiden tilted his head, considering it.

“…it’s a bit early for that word, but I’m not apposed to the idea. Are you?”

“No,” Jaskier shook his head, “not apposed at all.”

“Wonderful.” Aiden tore off another piece of meat, holding it teasingly just above Jaskier’s head.

Jaskier chuckled, stretching his neck to reach the food, his mouth closing around Aiden’s fingers once again. His eyes slipped closed as he ran his tongue along Aiden’s fingers, enjoying the salt of his skin on his tongue, and Aiden groaned. “Aren’t you just perfect,” he whispered as he slowly pulled his fingers away from Jaskier’s mouth, running the tips of his fingers over Jaskier’s lower lip. “You’d really let me do anything to you, wouldn’t you?”

He opened his eyes again, smiling at the way Aiden was staring at him, eyes glinting in the firelight, fully entranced by Jaskier. “I would let you do so much more to me than I think you even understand,” Jaskier said honestly.

Aiden shifted, his eyes flickering between Jaskier’s eyes and his mouth as Aiden drew closer. “Oh? What would you let me do to you?” he asked, his voice low as he slowly reached for something behind Jaskier.

“I’d let you hunt me down, edge me for hours, sink your teeth into me so deep you drew blood. I’d let you wake me up in the middle of the night just to fuck me, let you steal me away with no warning, fuck, I’d let you breed me if that were possible-“

He stopped talking as Aiden slammed their lips together, swallowing the sounds from Jaskier’s mouth.

Aiden pulled back, panting. “…I will not cause you harm,” he promised, and Jaskier nodded.

“I know. That’s *why* I’d let you do all of that.”

“ *Fuck,* ” Aiden groaned, before taking a breath, and pulling back, pulling with him the waterskin that had been in Jaskier’s pack. “…You… need water,” he managed. “Tonight’s going to be intense, and you’d better hold on tight.”

Jaskier’s grin grew. “My hands are bound, remember? You’re going to have to hold me close.”

“Cheeky,” Aiden grinned, uncorking the water and holding it up to Jaskier’s mouth.

Jaskier’s lips closed around it and Aiden tilted the water, further back than Jaskier was used to, and he did his best to swallow and keep up as Aiden watched, before finally pulling back, leaving Jaskier gasping for air.

He barely got a breath in before Aiden was stealing it again, his lips pressed against Jaskier’s, licking up the water from his mouth as Aiden held him close.

Jaskier's head began to spin, growing light headed without air, but he still matched Aiden at every turn, pressing against him and tangling their tongues together until he finally had to sag, too light headed to keep up.

Aiden finally pulled back, arms holding him up as Jaskier pulled in breath after breath, the world shifting back into focus as he got air in his lungs once more.

"Fucking addictive," Aiden whispered, and Jaskier grinned a bit, everything still hazy as he did his best to shift himself upright once more. "And there are those beautiful tears again…"

Jaskier blinked, not having realized his eyes had begun to water. "Want to come make some more?" he asked, and Aiden's grip on his arms tightened.

"So eager for me," he whispered. "Fuck, your entire body's begging me to fuck you."

"My body and my *mouth,* " Jaskier retorted. "Stop stealing my breath with your lips and steal it with your *cock.* "

Aiden chuckled, rising to his feet and undoing the laces on his pants as Jaskier rolled onto his knees properly, spreading them a bit to give himself enough balance to do this. "Have you done this often, little slut?" Aiden asked, pulling out his cock as Jaskier's mouth watered, and he swallowed. "Spent many nights on your knees before men?"

"Come find out," Jaskier challenged, and Aiden tangled his hand in Jaskier's hair, pulling his head back sharply so Jaskier couldn't look away from his face.

"Usually, I'd ask you to repeat your safeword, but you won't be able to use it. So how do you want to communicate to me if you've had enough?"

Jaskier wriggled his wrists behind his back a bit, before he had his palms facing each other, and he clapped them together twice.

Aiden nodded. "Very good. As a reminder, my safeword is archespore. Now. Are you ready?"

"Yes sir," Jaskier grinned, and then opened his mouth as Aiden pulled him onto his cock, his fingers still threaded in Jaskier's hair.

Aiden *groaned,* and Jaskier let his jaw relax, taking as much of Aiden into his mouth as he could in one go.

Aiden paused when he reached the entrance to Jaskier's throat, and Jaskier ran his tongue along Aiden's cock appreciatively. " *Fuck,* " Aiden groaned, his hips thrusting forward into Jaskier's mouth, before Aiden began moving Jaskier along his cock, rocking his hips forward and back as Jaskier hollowed his cheeks and hummed, pulling out every trick he'd learned. "Fucking- fuck- are you ready for me to fuck your throat?" he asked, and Jaskier just tried to push himself further down onto Aiden's cock in response.

"Fucking- shit- fuck- you're fucking perfect-" Aiden gasped out above him, slowly pulling him further, the head of his cock pushing its way into Jaskier's throat as Jaskier's finally took all of Aiden into his mouth.

Jaskier carefully swallowed, squeezing Aiden's cock in his throat as he stared up at the Witcher, memorizing the way he fell apart as Jaskier continued to pleasure him.

Fuck, but this was perfect.

The thrusts of Aiden's hips as he tried to hold a rhythm, allowing Jaskier a gentle reprieve every few moments to make sure he could still breathe even as it was clear Aiden was nearing his own edge. The way his fingers tightened in Jaskier's hair, that perfect pressure that bordered on a pain Jaskier wanted so badly. The way his jaw ached, his shoulders ached, his *wrists* ached in that perfect way that meant his body was being well used.

Jaskier could feel his eyes beginning to water again, and he pushed himself further onto Aiden's cock, taking him into his throat and staring up into Aiden's eyes as he began to hum.

"Oh *fuck*- " Aiden didn't get a chance to finish that thought as he came, holding Jaskier in place on his cock as Jaskier did his best to swallow around Aiden's cock again.

Finally, when Jaskier was starting to get light headed again from the lack of air, Aiden pulled out, gasping for air in time with Jaskier. "Fucking perfect," Aiden gasped, sinking to his knees in front of Jaskier and pressing kisses to his cheeks, catching the tears as they fell.

"Does that answer your question?" Jaskier asked, his voice rather hoarse.

"My question?" Aiden pulled back, confused, and Jaskier chuckled.

"If I've pleasured men like that before."

They both chuckled, and Aiden nodded. "Oh, you *definitely* knew what you were doing. Gorgeous fucking slut that you are."

Jaskier grinned, before gasping as Aiden pushed him down onto the bedroll. "Your turn," Aiden fucking *winked,* before working at the laces of Jaskier's pants and undoing them, pulling Jaskier's cock out and dropping onto it.

Perfect wet heat enveloped Jaskier's cock and he let his head fall back, moaning as Aiden took him to the root in an instant. "Oh- fuck- speak for your damn self- how many times have *you* done this- *fuck,"* he groaned, closing his eyes as Aiden pulled Jaskier closer by his hips, bobbing his head up and down on Jaskier's cock, his tongue running along Jaskier's head before sliding along the slit as Jaskier whimpered.

Aiden then ducked his head down again, taking Jaskier into his throat as he- *fucking*-

Jaskier didn't feel the slightest bit bad about coming so quickly, his orgasm crashing into him so hard his mind drifted away entirely, content and perfect.

He wasn't sure how long he drifted for before the crackling of the fire and the warmth of Aiden's arms wrapped around him brought him back.

He blinked, finding that his arms were no longer tied behind his back, and he shifted to see Aiden wrapped around him.

“There you are darling,” Aiden whispered gently, fingers brushing Jaskier's hair away from his face. “You slipped away from me for a bit there. You back with me?”

Jaskier slowly nodded, his mind quiet for once.

“That’s very good. Come on. I’ve got to get you to drink some water, but then you can go to sleep if you’d like. How does that sound?”

Jaskier just nodded his head again, and lifted his head to swallow the water from the waterskin Aiden pressed gently to his lips. After a moment he pulled back, and Aiden smiled at him, before kissing him gently on the forehead. “Get some sleep, Jaskier. You did so very well.”

Jaskier smiled, nodding again as he let himself drift off to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

It's gonna be a little while till we get back to the plot still, sorry.

Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

Some conversations and answers

Chapter Notes

I wonder if anyone's going to have any more 'tiny angsty revelations' in this chapter...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was rare, to be able to wake up curled around a warm body, the scent of satisfaction and sex in the air.

And this was the second morning in a row he'd been able to wake up like this.

Jaskier was still asleep, so Aiden detangled himself and rose to his feet, starting some food going on the remnants of the fire before he began breaking down camp.

The bard was *adorable,* and now that they were… in an agreement, Aiden didn't feel bad about watching Jaskier as he slept.

"I'd let you wake me up in the middle of the night just to fuck me, let you steal me away with no warning,"

Kinky. *So* fucking kinky.

Sleep fucking wasn't one of *his* kinks, but…

He sighed, leaning back, remembering long winters spent with his lovers. Eskel's gentle lips against his skin waking him up.

Eskel, oh Eskel. The reason Aiden knew it was possible for a Witcher to orgasm ten times in a single night.

…Would they also find Jaskier to be as addictive as he did now? Or would they find him as irritating as Aiden had at first?

He shook his head, finishing his tasks and settling in next to the fire.

It didn't matter.

He wasn't likely to see Jaskier again after he got the bard back to Oxenfurt.

Well.

Maybe.

He hadn't seemed opposed to the idea of meeting up again after.

But the odds of him crossing paths with the others was still slim.

He looked up as Jaskier shifted, letting out a little sigh, and then scrunching his nose as he woke up.

Aiden chuckled. "Oh, I'm sorry, would you rather I be wrapped around you when you wake up?" he asked, walking over.

"If that's an option," Jaskier mumbled, and Aiden grinned, laying down behind Jaskier on his bedroll and wrapping his arms around him, clutching his wrists tight.

"Better?" he asked into Jaskier's neck, almost *purring* at the spike in arousal.

"Much," Jaskier sighed, letting his head fall back as he relaxed beautifully for Aiden.

Aiden allowed himself a moment of indulgence, sticking his nose in Jaskier's neck and breathing in the scents of pure contentment and arousal. "Fuck, you smell wonderful," Aiden muttered, and Jaskier melted back once more.

"Mmmm, is a nice way to wake up," he whispered, and Aiden pressed a kiss to Jaskier's neck before he stood up again.

"Come on Jaskier, breakfast's ready and then it's onto the path once more."

Yawning, Jaskier nodded, stretching as he worked out his sore muscles.

Aiden watched him, that same curiosity welling up again. "…Where did you learn to stretch your muscles like that?" he finally asked.

Jaskier just grinned. "You're not the first person I've shared kinks with. Just the most skilled."

That explained… quite a lot, really.

Aiden handed over the food, and thought as he ate his own meal. "…So. What other kinks do you have, that I might be surprised by?"

The grin Jaskier shot him from across camp nearly had him wanting to cross the camp and kiss the look off his face, but Aiden pulled that instinct back again.

His madness had been let out to play too many times, he needed to be pulling it *back in.*

“I don’t think any of my kinks would surprise you at this point,” Jaskier teased, and Aiden had to concede that it was a good point.

“Perhaps not, but I’m still curious. What all did a little university student get into?”

“So fucking much,” Jaskier groaned, chewing as he thought. “Alright, well, kinks I tried and *didn’t* like, I *do not* have a daddy kink.”

Aiden chuckled. “You’re right, that’s utterly unsurprising.”

“Hmmm… oh! I-“ Jaskier cut off, *blushing.* “…nevermind,” he muttered, and *immediately* Aiden was interested.

“Oh?” he asked, the cat instincts inside him sensing *prey* and-

No, no, he needed to respect it.

…He’d nudge at it.

“Come now, I already know about your breeding kink, I highly doubt anything you could say would *shock* me,” he reasoned.

Jaskier took a deep breath, his face *red,* but nodded. “I… remember… the leshen?” he muttered, and Aiden tilted his head, a terrible idea sparking in his mind.

“…Which part? The vines? Or the part that it was a monster?”

Jaskier ducked his head, running a hand over the back of his neck. “…both? Like- I’m not an idiot, I’m not going to go off and try to find a monster to fuck me because there is *no* way that could end well for anyone involved, but… I’ve… read some books,” he finally muttered, and Aiden *grinned.*

Oh, this was just *delightful.*

Aiden grinned, crossing back over to Jaskier and tilting his head up. “I promise you, you are *not* the only person who feels that way. I’m a Witcher. I haven’t done it very often, but there are some monsters that it’s easier to fuck them- or be fucked *by* them, than anything else.”

Jaskier pulled in a breath. “…really?”

He nodded. “Sucubi and Incubi are the first to come to mind. They’re not even monsters, really, just nonhumans with dangerous abilities, but there are others too. But you shouldn’t try it without first confirming with a Witcher that you’re not getting yourself in far over your head, and some of them don’t *want* anything to do with humans.”

Jaskier nodded quickly. “Of course. I- I don’t think I’d ever have the courage to even try.”

Aiden just grinned. “Something tells me you have a lot more courage than you think. Now come on. We should get back onto the road. The sooner we can make camp, the sooner we can find some more gorgeous kinks of yours.”

Of course, it made sense that with the conversation about monsters earlier in the day, that they would run into one.

Jaskier wasn't even sure what it was, just that it was very big, *very* scary, and it snarled quite viciously at him.

He *ducked,* making sure he was out of the way as Aiden quickly decapitated the thing, and stared in awe. "…Is it usually so fast to kill monsters?" he asked, and Aiden snorted, shaking his head.

"No, but usually I don't have a beautiful idiot standing there acting as bait."

Jaskier sighed, straightening up. "Right. And how did you not realize it was there before?"

Aiden chuckled, coming back to offer Jaskier a hand up. "Like I said. Beautiful idiot. It was going to leave you alone till you stumbled into *it.* "

"In all fairness," Jaskier remarked as he accepted Aiden's hand, "you left me alone."

"For thirty seconds! You shouldn't be able to find trouble in thirty seconds!" Aiden shook his head, then tilted it, staring at Jaskier. "…You didn't try to use your knife."

"What knife?" Jaskier asked innocently. It wasn't a lie, technically.

Aiden just crossed his arms. "The one I know you snuck from my pack that first morning as we left Caelf. I'm half tempted to buy you one of your own."

Jaskier shrugged. "Just because I know how to steal knives doesn't mean I ever learned how to use them."

After a few moments, Aiden nodded. "Alright. This evening while we're waiting for the food to cook, I'm showing you how to *use* that thing." He turned back to the monster, harvesting various parts of it till he stood back up, nodding. "Right, we can keep going now."

As they walked, Jaskier noticed Aiden sneaking glimpses at him, until Jaskier eventually tired of it and sighed. "You can ask, you know."

"Why do you know how to steal a knife, but not how to use one?"

"Theater," Jaskier answered easily enough, and Aiden paused.

"…what?"

"I was in a series of plays my first two years, and… well, everyone wants to be in a play in Oxenfurt. It's hard to get a break. I'd always be given minor roles, where I was expected to be near the stage at all times, but rarely on it. So… I got bored. Started challenging myself to knick things from the other students without them noticing. Realized I was good at it, so I kept it up. Started challenging myself to see what the most useless item was I could steal,

what the *closest* item to someone was I could steal, how long I could stand next to someone before they noticed I was too close, and so on."

"So you're a good thief because of a *prank?* "

"You'd be surprised how effective pranks can be as motivators for unlikely skills."

Aiden *laughed,* and Jaskier grinned. "Oh, oh the others would *love* you."

Something fluttered in Jaskier's chest at that. "…would they?"

Aiden nodded as he grinned. "They definitely would. You're an absolute delight."

Jaskier tried not to let his blush show, but he had a feeling Aiden could see it anyway.

He was a delight.

He, impulsive, reckless, *loud* Jaskier, was a delight.

That felt good.

Chapter End Notes

Almost through the smut, just a few more chapters then we're back to some semblance of plot

End Notes

As always, you can come chat with me on Tumblr- Wildpoet42, or Discord- Wildpoet
Stay crazy y'all!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!